A BRIEF

DEFENCE

OF

Infant-Baptiſm.

WITH AN

APPENDIX,

Wherein is ſhewed, that it is not neceſſary that Baptiſm ſhould be adminiſtred by Dipping.

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TO THE READER.

THE following Treatiſe is the Subſtance of ſome Diſcourſes which I delivered in my Pariſh-Church, for the Eſtabliſhment of my Hearers in the preſent Truth: which I now publiſh, partly for their ſakes, to put them in remembrance thereof, and that they may have ſomething ſtill by them to oppoſe to the reſtleſs and importunate Inſinuations of thoſe that are of the other Perſwaſion: And partly, in hopes that it may be of ſome Uſe to others, that either need or deſire Settlement or Information herein. If it ſhall fall into the Hands of any of thoſe of the other way, I only deſire this of them, that they will endeavour to read it with as little Prejudice as they can: For I can aſ-

ſure them, that I have no mind either to deceive, or to be deceived. But as I have learned, and am perſwaded of the Truth, as it is in Jeſus; ſo do I deſire to ſpeak, and preach, and live. If any ſhall think that this had been a Province fitter for others to have undertaken, I ſhall readily join with them in the ſame Opinion. But yet I ſhall add this, that I have ſome Reaſons to incline me to do as I have done: And I doubt not but to find Excuſe at leaſt, among all thoſe that are truly candid, and ſincere Lovers of Truth. If thou receiveſt, Reader, any Benefit thereby, give God the Praiſe, and pray for me.

JOHN OLLYFFE.

A Brief Defence of Infant-Baptiſm.

THAT I may proceed with all imaginable Plainneſs in this Matter, I ſhall firſt ſet down what I have to ſay by way of Argument for it, which I ſhall endeavour to clear up and confirm; and then I ſhall afterwards endeavour to remove the Objections that are moſt commonly made, and moſt uſually rais'd againſt it.

To begin with the firſt: That which I have to ſay by way of Argument in the Defence of Infant-Baptiſm, is this, *viz.*

They that are to be owned and received by us, as the Children of God, and his Peculiar and Covenant-People, and Members of the Church of Chriſt, to whom the promiſed Bleſſings of the Covenant do belong, ought to be baptized:

But there are ſome young Children or Infants, who are to be received and owned by us, as the Children of God, and his Peculiar and Covenant-People, and Members of the Church of Chriſt, to whom the promiſed Bleſſings of the Covenant do belong:

Therefore there are ſome young Children or Infants who ought to be baptized.

For the clearing and confirming of this Argument, two things are to be made out and confirmed.

I. That there are ſome young Children or Infants, who are to be owned and received by us, as the Children of God, and his Peculiar and Covenant-People, and Members of the Church of Chriſt, to whom the promiſed Bleſſings of the Covenant do belong.

II. That being to be ſo owned and received by us, they are therefore to be baptized.

I. That there are ſome young Children or Infants, who are to be owned and received by us, as the Children of God, and his Peculiar and Covenant-People, and Members of the Church of Chriſt, to whom the promiſed Bleſſings of the Covenant do belong.

For there are ſome young Children or Infants that have been ſo received, and reckoned, and declared by God himſelf, for his peculiar

culiar and Covenant-People, and Children, and Members of his Church; and this their Church-Membership and Relation to him, as his peculiar Covenant-People and Children, hath never been aboliſh'd or taken away by him, but is ſtill continued, and rather confirmed to ſome young Children or Infants ſtill: therefore there are ſome young Children or Infants that are likewiſe ſtill to be owned and received by us for ſuch.

1. I ſay, that ſome young Children or Infants have been owned and received, and declared by God, for his Children, and Members of his Church, and have been reckoned and taken by him into the Number of his peculiar Covenant-People.

By the Church of God I mean that Body and Number of Perſons which God hath choſen, and called, and ſet apart in a ſeparate manner from the reſt of the World, to be brought nearer to himſelf in Relation, and learning the true Religion, in order to the partaking of thoſe ſpiritual and eternal Bleſſings by Chriſt, which he hath promiſed in the Covenant of Grace.

And they that are of the Number of, or do belong to this Body or Society of Perſons, I call the Members of the Church, as being Parts or Members of this Body.

And theſe being ſuch as God is pleaſed to take into a nearer and more appropriate Relation to himſelf, than he doth others, are therefore alſo called his Children or Covenant-People; and he is their Father and Head. So that to be a Child of God, and Member of his Church, and of the Number of his peculiar Covenant-People, is all one; that is, doth denote one and the ſame Perſon.

Now, I ſay, that ſome young Children or Infants have been of the Number of thoſe that have been thus choſen and taken by God into this near Relation to himſelf, as his Covenant-People and Children, ſo that he hath had a peculiar and ſeparate Reſpect to them, as well as to their Parents and other adult Perſons, in another and diſtinguiſhing manner from what he hath had to the other People of the World; and this his Reſpect to them he hath openly declared and teſtified, that others in like manner might accordingly own and receive them. Such hath been the Grace and Goodneſs of God, to chooſe and take the Infants of ſuch as he hath called into a near Covenant-Relation to himſelf, that they might partake alſo of the Bleſſings of the ſame Covenant.

It is to be obſerved from the Beginning, that the Seed of thoſe who have been God's Covenant-People, have been likewiſe owned and taken by God into Covenant with him; and ſo have continued

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in that State, till by their own Wickedneſs and Apoſtacy they have fallen from it, and ſo have been diſcovenanted or rejected by God. And the whole Current and Harmony of Scripture ſheweth, that ever ſince there was a viſible Church on Earth, the Children thereof have by the Lord's Appointment been a Part thereof. *Eve*, the Mother of all Living, hath a Promiſe made, *Gen.* 3. 15. not only of Chriſt the Head-ſeed, but through him alſo of a Church-ſeed, to proceed from her in a continued lineal Succeſſion, which ſhould continually be at viſible Enmity with, and ſtand at a Diſtance, and be ſeparated from the Seed of the Serpent. Under that Promiſe made to *Eve* and her Seed, the Children of *Adam* are born, and are a part of the Church in *Adam*'s Family. Even *Cain* was ſo, *Gen.* 4. 1, 3. till caſt out from the Preſence of God therein, for the Murder of his Brother, *ver.* 14. being now manifeſtly one of the Seed of the Serpent, 1 *John* 3. 12. and ſo becoming the Father of a wicked unchurch'd Race. But then God appointed unto *Eve* another, *viz. Seth*, in whom to continue the Line of her Church-ſeed, *Gen.* 4. 25. And how it did continue in his Seed in their Generations, is ſhewed in *Gen.* 5. And hence the Children of the Church are called *the Sons of God*, (which is as much as Members of the viſible Church) in contradiſtinction to the *Daughters of Men*, the Progeny of unchurched *Cain*, Gen. 6. 2. Again, if righteous *Noah* be taken into the Ark, (then the only preſerving Place of the Church, to which the Apoſtle applieth Baptiſm, as having a myſtical Relation to it) his Children alſo are taken in with him, *Gen.* 7. 1. though one of them, *viz. Ham*, after proved degenerate and wicked; but till he ſo appears, he is continued in the Church with his Brethren. And as the Race of *Ham*, or his Son *Canaan* (Parent and Children) are curſed, *Gen.* 9. 25, 26, 27. So likewiſe *Shem* (Parent and Children) is bleſſed, and continued in the Place of Bleſſing, the Church. As *Japhet* alſo, or *Japhet*'s Poſterity (ſtill Parent and Children) ſhall in time be brought in. And the holy Line, mentioned in *Gen.* 11. 10—26. ſhews how the Church continued in the Seed of *Shem*, from him unto *Abraham*.

Propoſitions concerning the Subject of Baptiſm, &c. by a Synod at Boſton, *p.* 12.

And when that Race grew degenerate, (as it is plain they did, *Joſh.* 24. 2.) then God called *Abraham* out of his Country, and from his Kindred, and eſtabliſhed his Covenant with him, which ſtill took in Parents and Children, *Gen.* 17. 7. And here was a Token or Sign ordered for the Confirmation of this Covenant, which was to be applied to Children in their Infant-ſtate, even at eight Days old, *ver.* 10, 11, 12. Here indeed we have the firſt mention of

of Infants as owned by God, and taken into Covenant by him, together with their Parents; as here we read of the first Token of the Covenant that was to be applied to them. But the same is also to be held of those that are spoken of before, though it be not particularly mentioned, because there was no Sign then appointed for the confirming of this Covenant to them as there now was. Yet forasmuch as they are reckoned still to be, and continue in their Church-state, till by their Wickedness or Apostacy they were cut off, and are reckoned to be in this Church-state, as coming and proceeding from such Parents as God had chosen and called into so near a Relation to himself, they are therefore to be reckoned even from their Infancy to have been in this State.

And as for the Covenant made with *Abraham* and his Infant-seed, I shall briefly observe, for the preventing of Objections, that it was the same which in the Gospel is called the *new Covenant*. And Circumcision, which was ordered to be the Token or Seal of it, and to be applied to the same Infant-seed, was a Token and Seal of it, as such; as appears by the Terms which in the main Article of it are the same with those which are reckoned by the Apostle to belong to
Gen. 17.7. the New Covenant: For *I will establish*, saith God, *my Covenant between me and thee, and thy Seed after thee, in their Generations, for an everlasting Covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy Seed after thee.* This is the main Point. And thus that which the Apostle calls the *New Covenant*, runs in the same Terms in that main Article likewise, Heb. 8. 10. *I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a People.* And the Psalmist hath taught us, that this imports and signifieth much more than any kind of outward Prosperity whatsoever, or all together. For howsoever a People may be look'd upon happy, *that is in such a Case*; yet this is the chief Point, the all in all, the Sum of that Blessedness that can belong to a People; *Psal.* 144. 15. *Happy is that People whose God is the Lord.* And our Saviour hath deduced the Promise of the Resurrection it self, from God's being *the God of* Abraham, *and of* Isaac, *and of* Jacob, *Matth.* 22. So that consequently the Resurrection of all others, to whom God is a God, may be concluded from the same Covenant-relation likewise. So that the Covenant made with *Abraham* and his Seed, in their Generations, was the Gospel-Covenant for the main Articles of it, and contained in it the greatest Gospel-Blessings. The Promise and Giving of *Canaan* was but an Appendix or Appurtenance to it, and not the principal thing respected; but under *that* a better Country was intended: And so *Abraham* understood it, for *he looked for a City which had a Foun-*

Foundation, whoſe Builder and Maker is God, Heb. 11. 10. But *he ſojourned in that* earthly *Land of Promiſe, as in a ſtrange Country, dwelling in Tabernacles with* Iſaac *and* Jacob, *the Heirs with him of the ſame Promiſe*, ver. 9. So that neither he himſelf, nor many others to whom the Promiſe was made, did enjoy the earthly *Canaan* for an Inheritance. But *they confeſs'd themſelves, that they were Strangers and Pilgrims upon Earth; and they deſired a better Country, that is, an heavenly*, ver. 13, 16. which they did no doubt, by virtue of the Promiſe, as they underſtood it. And this the Apoſtle looks upon a verifying and making good that Relation that God engaged himſelf in to them; for *therefore*, ſaith he, *he was not aſhamed to be called their God, becauſe he had prepared for them a City*, ver. 16. So that *Abraham* had that which the Apoſtle calls *the Promiſe of eternal Inheritance*, Heb. 9. 15. *For if the Inheritance be of the Law, it is no more of Promiſe; but now*, the Apoſtle ſaith, *God gave it to* Abraham *by Promiſe*, Gal. 3. 18. So that the Promiſe of eternal Life and Happineſs in Heaven, is contained in the Covenant that God made with *Abraham* and his Seed; together with thoſe that were born in his Houſe, who yet had never any ſhare with his Seed in the Land of *Canaan*, as an Inheritance, at all; nor was the Meſſiah to deſcend from their Loins. And what was this then leſs than the Goſpel-Covenant? Gen. 17. 12, 13.

And if the Promiſe of eternal Life was contained in this Covenant, then we may be ſure it contained alſo the Promiſe of Juſtification or Remiſſion of Sin. And if ſo, then what was it leſs than the Goſpel-Covenant? And thus the Apoſtle aſſures us likewiſe it was, and that the Goſpel was preached unto *Abraham*, Gal. 3. 8. *For the Scripture foreſeeing that God would juſtify the Heathen through Faith, preach'd the Goſpel before unto* Abraham, *ſaying, In thee ſhall all Nations be bleſſed.* It is true, this Clauſe which the Apoſtle quotes, is not in *Gen.* 17. wherein the Covenant is made with *Abraham* and his Seed, which we have inſiſted upon; but in *Gen.* 12. 3. and elſewhere. But yet this Promiſe which the Apoſtle deduceth from theſe Words, muſt likewiſe be contained in this Covenant; and ſo thoſe Words muſt be alſo a Part of it, though ſpoken at another time: Becauſe Circumciſion, that was the Token of this Covenant, was a Seal to *Abraham* of this Promiſe; *Rom.* 4. 11. *And he received the Sign of Circumciſion, a Seal of the Righteouſneſs of the Faith, which he had being yet uncircumciſed:* Which muſt be founded on the Promiſe; ſo that *that* Promiſe likewiſe belongs to this Covenant, and therefore is ſealed by it. And this Covenant, as delivered to *Abraham*, the Apoſtle tells us alſo, was *confirmed in Chriſt*, Gal. 3. 17.

and therefore can be no other than the Goſpel or New Covenant. Yea, and the Promiſe of divine Aſſiſtance for fulfilling the Conditions of the Covenant, was contained alſo in the ſame Covenant with *Abraham:* For ſo we find it was underſtood by the Church formerly; *Mic.* 7. 19, 20. *He will ſubdue our Iniquities; and thou wilt caſt their Sins into the Depth of the Sea. Thou wilt perform the Truth unto* Jacob, *and the Mercy to* Abraham, *which thou haſt ſworn to our Fathers from the Days of old.* Which muſt needs have Reſpect to God's Oath and Covenant with *Abraham.* And ſo alſo the Apoſtle reckons, that God's ſending his Son Chriſt to bleſs them, and to turn them from their Iniquities, was a great Inſtance of the Accompliſhment of the Covenant that God made with *Abraham*, Acts 3. 25, 26. For the great Deſign of God in this Covenant at firſt, (as appears by the firſt Call that was given him, *Gen.* 12. 1.) was to ſeparate him and his Family and Seed, from the reſt of the Nations, which were fallen into the vileſt Idolatry, and to preſerve Religion and the Worſhip of the true God in his Family. And the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, in whom the Covenant is founded, had this Deſign in it; *Luke* 1. 72, 73, 74, 75. *The Oath that he ſware to our Father* Abraham, *that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the Hands of our Enemies, might ſerve him without Fear, in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs before him all the Days of our Life.* So that the Covenant with *Abraham* was a Church-Covenant, and contained in it all the Terms and Deſign that belonged to ſuch a Covenant, and was made with all the Family of *Abraham*, in which his Infant-ſeed was alſo comprehended, and were to partake of the Promiſes and Privileges that appertained to it: It belonged to all his Family in the external Diſpenſation of it; and none were excluded from the Benefits of it, that did not exclude themſelves by their own actual Unbelief and Diſobedience to the Terms of it. And Circumciſion was a Seal of it to all with whom it was made, as the viſible Church of God, and to the Infant-ſeed of *Abraham*, as Parts or Members thereof. For Sacraments or Signs are not appointed to the Church Inviſible, (for who ſhall judg then to whom they are to be adminiſtred?) but to the Church as Viſible. Thus having cleared up the Nature of the *Abrahamical Covenant* which God made with him and his Seed, even in their Infant-ſtate, I ſhall now go forward, and ſhall obſerve how God hath ſhewn the ſame gracious Reſpects to Infants, in the Progreſs of his Diſpenſations towards the Jewiſh People.

And thus we find afterwards, that the whole Body of the Jewiſh Peo-

People in *Jacob*'s Line, amongſt whom Children alſo were contained, are collectively ſtiled by God himſelf *his Son*; Exod. 4. 22, 23. *Say unto* Pharaoh, *Thus ſaith the Lord*, Iſrael *is my Son, even my Firſt-born: And I ſay unto thee, Let my Son go, that he may ſerve me.* Thus God ſpeaks of them before they were formed into a Political Commonwealth, only becauſe he had choſen and called them out of the Nations, to be a peculiar People to himſelf. And in this Appellation their little ones were comprehended, as appears, becauſe they were of the Number of thoſe that were to go alſo: For *Pharaoh* would have let the Men of *Iſrael* go, but not their little ones, Exod. 10. 10. *But we will go, ſaith* Moſes, *with our Young and with our Old*, ver. 9. So that the whole Body of *Iſrael*, including little ones alſo, was *God's Son*; for God had choſen and called all the Seed of *Iſrael* to be his Covenant-People.

And therefore thus alſo *Moſes* afterwards enters and engages *all* into Covenant with God, one as well as another, taking in the *little ones* likewiſe: *Deut.* 29. 10, 11, 12, 13. *Ye ſtand this Day all of you before the Lord your God; your Captains of your Tribes, your Elders, and your Officers, with all the Men of* Iſrael; *your little ones, your Wives, and the Stranger that is in thy Camp, from the Hewer of thy Wood to the Drawer of thy Water; that thou ſhouldſt enter into Covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his Oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this Day; that he may eſtabliſh thee to Day for a People unto himſelf, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath ſaid unto thee, and as he hath ſworn unto thy Fathers, to* Abraham, *to* Iſaac, *and to* Jacob. So that this was but the renewing of the Abrahamical Covenant with the People, as appears by the latter Clauſe of it running in the ſame Terms, for the Accompliſhment of the Promiſe and Oath made to *Abraham* and his Seed. And in the next Chapter the Grace ſignified by Circumciſion, is there promiſed to Parents and Children, to enable them to perform the Terms of it: And it being promiſed to both, it imports that the Covenant, which Circumciſion ſealed, belongs to both: *For the Lord thy God will circumciſe thine Heart, and the Heart of thy Seed.* Deut. 30. 6

And after this again, even when the People were fallen off alſo to the Worſhip of other Gods, yet retaining ſtill the Acknowledgment of the God of *Iſrael*, (though they joined others with him) God challengeth and owns their Children for his; *Ezek.* 16. 20, 21. *Thou haſt taken thy Sons and thy Daughters, whom thou haſt born unto me, and theſe haſt thou ſacrificed: thou haſt ſlain my Children, and delivered them, to cauſe them to paſs through the Fire.*

Now it was upon *this* Account, *viz.* by virtue of God's chooſing and calling the Seed of *Abraham*, and ſeparating them from the reſt of the World to the Knowledg and Worſhip of the true God, that they were ſtiled his *peculiar People and Children*, and not upon a mere Political Account, or upon the Account of other carnal and temporal Reſpects: For in this manner we find *Moſes* ſpeaking to them; Deut 14. 1, 2. *Ye are the Children of the Lord your God*, and therefore are not to follow or comport with the Cuſtoms and Practices of the Heathen: *For thou art an holy People unto the Lord thy God; and the Lord hath choſen thee to be a peculiar People to himſelf, above all the Nations that are upon the Earth.* And ſo *chap.* 7. 6. *For thou art an holy People unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath choſen thee to be a ſpecial People unto himſelf, above all the People that are upon the Face of the Earth.* Which are the Appellations that are likewiſe given to the Members of the Chriſtian Church in the New-Teſtament-Times by the Apoſtle, 1 *Pet.* 2. 9. *Ye are a choſen Generation, a Royal Prieſthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar People, that ye ſhould ſhew forth the Praiſes of him who hath called you out of Darkneſs into his marvellous Light; which in time paſt were not a People, but are now the People of God.* So that theſe Titles being given to the Jews, import their like Covenant-relation to God in a Church-ſenſe, as they here belong to Chriſtians in the ſame Senſe.

Now the whole Body of the People of the Jews being called by God into this holy Covenant-relation to himſelf, are ſtiled by the Prophet, Iſrael *his called*, Iſa. 48. 12. And as thus he choſe and called them, ſo he *choſe their Seed after them*, Deut. 4. 37. The great Deſign of this Election and Call of God, being to preſerve pure Religion among them, which was extinguiſh'd in the reſt of the World; and therefore he took and adopted their Seed likewiſe to be as a Nurſery to the Vineyard of the Church. And therefore, as the Pſalmiſt ſaith, *He eſtabliſhed a Teſtimony in* Jacob, *and appointed a Law in* Iſrael, *which he commanded our Fathers that they ſhould make known unto their Children: that the Generation to come might know them, even the Children which ſhould be born, who ſhould ariſe and declare them to their Children.* According to *Deut.* 4. 9. and *chap.* 6. 7. the great Care and Deſign of God being to raiſe up an holy People to himſelf among the Nations, to preſerve the true Religion in the World; and it being of great Import to this, to have Children and little ones well educated and brought up in the Belief, and Owning, and Worſhip of the true God, he therefore ordered them a viſible Admiſſion, or Partnerſhip, and Memberſhip in his Church,

Pſal. 78. 5.

that

that they might be alſo owned and received as his People and Children, that their Parents and Guardians might be obliged to take the more Care of their Education for the promoting the great End of the Covenant. Thus the Adoption, and the Promiſes, as the Apoſtle tells us, pertained to all *Iſrael*, amongſt whom the young Children alſo were included, they being *all* God's Choſen and Called, and ſo continued till they were rejected and cut off, through their own actual Apoſtacy and Rebellion againſt God; and then they were diſcovenanted, both they and the Children of thoſe that were guilty of this Apoſtacy. But for others that continue ſtill in a profeſs'd Adheſion to God, and perſiſt in the Profeſſion of the true Religion, this their Church-ſtate, and Covenant-relation to God, as his peculiar People, is continued ſtill, both to them and their Seed, and was never taken off from either unto this Day: Which is the ſecond thing I am now to come to ſhew. Rom. 9. 4.

2. I ſay, that this Adoption of the Infants or young Children of his Covenant-People, into this near Relation to himſelf, as the Children of God, and ſo their Partnerſhip or Memberſhip in the viſible Church of God, was never aboliſh'd or taken away by God, but is ſtill continued, and rather confirmed.

For how indeed can it be imagined or ſuppoſed, that now in the Goſpel-Adminiſtration, which is an Adminiſtration wherein there is a greater Extenſiveneſs and Enlargement of God's gracious Reſpect to the World, in reſpect of ſpiritual Privileges and Mercies, than there was before, that his Goodneſs and gracious Reſpect ſhould be more reſtrained, in reference to Infants and young Children, than it was formerly? For the Infants of Jews and Proſelytes formerly were taken into the Number of God's Covenant-People and Children, and had the Seal of the Covenant applied to them for the Confirmation thereof. And if this Privilege and Benefit ſhould be now taken away, their Condition after Chriſt would be worſe than before, and they ſhould be Loſers by the World's becoming Chriſtian. This one would think none ſhould ever imagine. Neither, when we ſpeak thus, do we complain againſt God, but againſt them, who would exclude whom the Lord hath not excluded.

For we do not find that ever God hath repented of any Grace or Favour, that he hath ſhewed to the little ones of his Covenant-People, in reſpect of their being to be reckoned of his Church. But in thoſe Prophecies which we find in the Old Teſtament concerning the future Diſcoveries and Declarations of his Favour, we find that there was the ſame Grace and Kindneſs foretold and intended to be ſhewn to the Children as to the Parents. So that in this manner the Church ſhould be propagated from Parents to Children, and ſo the true Religion preſerved in this way

way, as the moſt proper means for it. Thus in that Prophecy which hath relation to the Calling of the Jews in Goſpel-times, as appears by the Apoſtle's quoting ſome part of it to that purpoſe, *Rom.* 11. 26. *viz.* Iſa. 59. 20. *As for me, this is my Covenant, ſaith the Lord; My Spirit that is upon thee, and my Words which I have put in thy Mouth, ſhall not depart out of thy Mouth, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seed, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seeds Seed, ſaith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.* And ſo in like manner it is a Prophecy of Goſpel-times; *Iſa.* 44. 3. *I will pour Water upon him that is thirſty, and Floods upon the dry Ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my Bleſſing upon thy Offspring: And they ſhall ſpring up as among the Graſs, as Willows by the Water-Courſes.* And *Ezek.* 47. 22. The Tenour and Intendment of God's Favour to little ones is always the ſame as it ever was, in reference to their being of his Church and People; nor is there the leaſt Indication of any Deſign of the Diſſolution or Alteration thereof.

For firſt, for clearing of this Matter, let us conſider, that when God firſt ſhewed this Reſpect to *Abraham* and his Infant-ſeed, to take them near to himſelf as his peculiar People, God's Election and Call of them to this peculiar Covenant-relation to himſelf, as his Children and People, and ſo his giving them a Partnerſhip or Memberſhip in the *Abrahamical Church*, was not with Reſpect merely to their Proceeding by natural Generation from *Abraham*, but from *Abraham* as a Believer and Worſhipper of the true God; there being a fair Proſpect upon this Account, that *Abraham* would take care to train them up and educate them in the true Religion. Whereas the Children of Heathens, where there was no ſuch Proſpect, had no ſuch regard ſhewn them by God. This ſeems to be much upon God's Heart, as we may expreſs it, in his treating with *Abraham*, and giving of him thoſe great Promiſes, *Gen.* 18. 19. *For I know him, that he will command his Children and his Houſhold after him; and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord, to do Juſtice and Judgment, that the Lord may bring upon* Abraham *that which he hath ſpoken of him.* It was with *Abraham*, as a Believer and true Worſhipper of God, that God treated and made this Covenant, and ſo took his Children alſo into that near Relation to himſelf, when the Children of the Heathen were neglected, as their Fathers were. And ſo this Bleſſing, in like manner, was to be continued to his Children and Poſterity, to ſucceſſive Generations, as *Believers*, or Children of *Abraham*'s Faith, ſtill continuing to believe in, and worſhip the God of *Abraham*. In this Reſpect God promiſed to be their God, and the God of their Seed, upon condition that they keep his Covenant and his Statutes. But if they refuſed to do ſo, they were to be cut off, and to have no Part or Inheritance in God or the Bleſſings

Bleſſings of his Covenant, neither they nor their Seed. But on the other ſide, they that were not of the natural Seed of *Abraham*, but were bought with his Money, or were born of Gentile Parents, in his Houſe, they being brought into this near Capacity to be inſtructed and brought up in the true Religion, were likewiſe to ſhare in this Covenant, and to partake of the ſame ſpiritual Privileges with the natural Seed of *Abraham*, and were to be reckoned and numbred with them as the People and Children of God; and God promiſed to be their God likewiſe, as well as of *Abraham*'s natural Seed. And ſo alſo afterwards, all thoſe Gentiles that were at any time proſelyted and brought over to the Faith and Religion of *Abraham*, were with their Children admitted to the ſame Privileges. So that it appears, that it was with *Abraham* only as the Father of the Faithful, and conſequently with all thoſe that are the Children of the Faith of *Abraham* was this Covenant made, that God would be their God, and the God of their Seed, though they are not *Abraham*'s Children or Seed according to the Fleſh by natural Generation. The Covenant was made with *Abraham* and all his ſpiritual Seed, and not with his Seed meerly according to the Fleſh.

The Apoſtle hath cleared this to us, *Rom. 9. 6, 7, 8. Not as though the Word or Promiſe of God hath taken none effect*, becauſe he will reject and caſt off thoſe that were deſcended of *Abraham* for their Unbelief and rejecting the Goſpel, to whom you think that the Promiſes were made: *For they are not all* the true *Iſrael* of God, to whom the Promiſe belongs, *which are* deſcended *of* Iſrael; *neither becauſe they are the Seed of* Abraham by natural Generation only, *are they* all *Children of God's* Covenant: *but in* Iſrael *ſhall thy Seed be called* and choſen, to whom the Covenant and Promiſes ſhall belong. That is; All they which are the Children of the Fleſh, as proceeding from *Abraham* only by natural Generation, theſe, meerly as ſuch, are not the Children of God that he reckons amongſt his Covenant-People, but the Children of the Promiſe only, as *Iſaac* was, (that is, that are *Abraham*'s ſpiritual Seed) are accounted for the Seed that God took into that near Covenant-relation to himſelf; and theſe he will own ſtill in the ſame Capacity as ever, both they and their Seed. And therefore the Covenant of God to *Abraham* and his Seed, ſtands firm againſt all the vain Objections of the unbelieving Jews. From this Diſcourſe of the Apoſtle then it followeth, that it was not with the Nation of the Jews only, as being that natural Seed of *Abraham*, that the Covenant was made, and that the Adoption did belong to them and to their Seed; but it was, and is a Benefit belonging to all Believers, as the Children of *Abraham*'s Faith, that did or ever ſhould join themſelves to the People of the God of *Abraham*. All ſuch

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are ſtill an holy and peculiar People to God, both they and their Seed, till they cut themſelves off by their own actual Rebellion and Apoſtacy, as the Jews did in our Saviour's and the Apoſtles times, by their not receiving him that was ſent of God. The ſame ſpiritual Privileges do belong to all believing Parents, and to their Seed and Family, or thoſe they become Guardians or Tutors to, to bring them up in the true Religion, now in the Goſpel-Miniſtration, as did belong to the Children and Family of Jewiſh Believers formerly.

Compare Acts 3. 25. Gal. 3. 16, 17, 18, 29. Rom. 4. 16. Heb. 6. 17.

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But this Matter may be rendred yet more clear from ſeveral Paſſages in the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe in *Rom.* 11. for it appears there by the Apoſtle, that the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Church are radically and fundamentally the ſame Church, the ſame Stock and Root; and the ſame Terms and Conditions of Church-memberſhip or Diſchurching do belong to both. Nor is the Chriſtian Church any new Conſtitution diſtinct from the Jewiſh, nor is the way of Church-memberſhip in it any other now than what was before. The Laws are indeed altered in many things, but in this Matter there is no Alteration, there is the ſame Covenant, and the ſame Church, and the Church is ſtill conſtituted of *Abraham*'s ſpiritual Seed, as it was before; ſo that the ſame Church-members alſo keep their Place in it as there did then. And conſequently as Infants, or little Children of Believers, were Members of it before their Parents became Chriſtian; ſo they continue to be ſtill after they became ſo: And ſo the Children of all Gentile Believers for the future. For conſider, *ver.* 17. the believing Gentiles are but *grafted in amongſt them, and with them partake of the ſame* ſpiritual Privileges: and *ver.* 20. it is *becauſe of Unbelief*, that any of *the Branches are broken off*: and they that believe are always in it. So that the Church is the ſame, and ſtill remains without any Diſcontinuance or Diſſolution of it, only Unbelievers are broken off from it, and others that believe are grafted in their room. It is the ſame *Olive-tree*, or the ſame Church ſtill, but ſome of the Branches are broken off, *ſc.* the unbelieving Jews; and others, that is, believing Gentiles, are grafted in: And none are ſhut out but only through Unbelief. They that believe con-

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dicated to God, and ſo are part of his Covenant-People. It is not a Matrimonial Holineſs that the Apoſtle intends, or that the Children of Believers are therefore holy, becauſe they are no Baſtards; for the Children of Pagans are as well holy in that Reſpect, (that were born in Wedlock) though the Parents neither of them were Believers. So that this Interpretation would make the Apoſtle ſpeak impertinently and untruly. It is a relative or federal Holineſs therefore that the Apoſtle muſt intend; and by this he ſhews, that ſuch Children are of an holy Conſideration in the Sight of God, and are of the Number of his Holy and Covenant-People.

So that we can no where find any Diſſolution or Diſcontinuance of the Church-membership of Infants under the Goſpel, which they once had; but it ſtill remains the ſame as ever, and is rather more confirmed: It being the ſame Church, Covenant, ſpiritual Privileges, and Members as ever; and theſe ſtill keeping by the ſame Grant, the ſame Place and ſtanding in the Church as ever they did. And as this therefore was once the Privilege of Infants of *Abraham*'s ſpiritual Seed, to ſtand in an holy Relation to God, as his peculiar Covenant-People and Children; ſo it is ſtill. But for a further Confirmation and clearing of this Matter, we may obſerve alſo from our Saviour ſome ſuch Indications of the ſame Reſpect had to them, in chooſing, calling, and eſteeming of them as ever.

To this purpoſe we find, *Mark* 10. 14. *They brought young Children to him, that he ſhould touch them,* (or as St. *Matthew* hath it, *Matth.* 19. 13. *that he ſhould put his Hands on them and pray) and his Diſciples rebuked thoſe that brought them: but when Jeſus ſaw it, he was much diſpleaſed, and ſaid unto them, Suffer the little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of ſuch is the Kingdom of God: And he took them up in his Arms, put his Hands upon them, and bleſſed them.* All which ſheweth Chriſt's good Will and Reſpect, and dear Affection to them, as Members of his Church, and part of his Kingdom. And which way ſoever the *Kingdom of God*, or the *Kingdom of Heaven* (as St. *Matthew* expreſſeth it) be here taken, which they are ſaid to be of, either for Heaven it ſelf, or the Church on Earth, their Church-membership in the viſible Church will hence be concludable. For if it be meant of the Church on Earth, (as that Phraſe is often taken for that) then it is the next and immediate Senſe of the Words of our Saviour. Or if it be to be underſtood of Heaven properly, yet then it will follow from it: For if the Kingdom of Heaven receive them, and they have a Portion in that, the viſible Church on Earth then may not exclude them: For none are of the Kingdom of Heaven above, that are not firſt of the Church on Earth: *Acts* 2. 47. *There were daily added to the Church ſuch as ſhould be ſaved.* And our Saviour's Reaſon here, *for of ſuch is the Kingdom of Heaven*, ſheweth, that he meant this of ſuch Infants, properly taken, and not only of Men like them in

in Humility: For that could be no Reaſon why *they* ſhould be brought unto him, becauſe *others* that are like them in Humility are of the Kingdom of Heaven, unleſs *they* are alſo of the ſame. And his pronouncing this as a Reaſon why they ſhould be brought unto him, and his imbracing them alſo in his Arms, and his laying his Hands upon them and bleſſing them, ſheweth a great deal more Reſpect to them than what was required for the healing them of any bodily Diſtemper; for neither was this Reaſon, nor all that Demonſtration of Affection to them needful for *that:* when if they had not been of the Kingdom of Heaven, they ſhould no doubt have been healed by him, if they had been brought unto him; and when they had been brought, a Word or a Touch would have effected that, without ſo much imbracing, praying, and bleſſing them. So that what can we conclude from all this, but a more than ordinary Reſpect of our Saviour to little Children, as to his Members and Proſelytes of his Kingdom; and that for this Cauſe he kindly treated them thus, as if on purpoſe, becauſe he foreſaw how little Regard would be had to them in this latter Age of the Church?

And thus again, *Luke 9.* 48. *He took a Child and ſet him by him, and ſaid unto them, Whoſoever ſhall receive this* (this individual Child) *in my Name, receiveth me.* But how can little Children be received in Chriſt's Name, if they belong not viſibly to him and to his Church? If they muſt be received in Chriſt's Name, ſo that whoſoever receiveth them may be ſaid to receive Chriſt, they muſt be ſpiritually related to Chriſt, as thoſe are that are of his Body, the Church. And this receiving them into the Church muſt needs be the moſt proper way of receiving them in Chriſt's Name, as thoſe that are ſpiritually related to him.

By all this that hath been ſaid we may plainly ſee the like Continuance of God's gracious Reſpect to little ones, as ever, without the leaſt Abatement or Alteration thereof; ſo that being once choſen and called, and eſteemed by God as his Children and peculiar People, as well as any of the Adult are, and ſo being reckoned therefore as Members of his Church, and as having a ſhare in the Covenant, as others, we muſt conclude from theſe continued Indications of his Favour and Kindneſs to them, that they ſtand in the ſame Relation to him ſtill, and accordingly we are ſo to own and receive them.

II. I now proceed to that which was in the ſecond Place propoſed for the ſtrengthning of our Argument, *viz.* that Infants or little Children being to be owned and reckoned by us as the Children of God, and Members of the Church of Chriſt, to whom the promiſed Bleſſings of the Covenant belong, they are therefore to be baptized. The Rightfulneſs and Reaſonableneſs of which Conſequence I ſhall now endeavour to make out.

1. From the Nature and Ends of Baptiſm, which is appointed by Chriſt to be the Ordinance of Initiation into the viſible Church, to be the Badg and Character of the Children of God, and of the Members of the Church of Chriſt, and for a ſolemn Dedication and Engagement of them to the Service of God, and for the ſealing of the promiſed Bleſſings to them. Now God having ſhewn ſuch Reſpect to little Children, as to chooſe and call them out from the reſt of the World, and to take them into his own Family, and to reckon them amongſt his People, together with others that are adult, may we not reaſonably infer, that when there is a viſible Badg or Ceremony appointed by God, by which others that are called by him ſhould be known and diſtinguiſh'd from the other People of the World, and have the Promiſes of the Covenant confirmed to them, that little Children partaking of the ſame Favour and Reſpect with them, ſhould have the ſame viſible Badg or Character likewiſe put upon them, that is put upon the reſt of his People, that they may be viſibly owned and received as his, in like manner with them; and ſo there may be Care taken about their Education in the true Religion, and in the Knowledg and Service of that God, to whom they are ſo ſolemnly dedicated? Baptiſm being a Mark or Rite appointed by God to this purpoſe, ſurely it is highly reaſonable that Infants ſhould be baptized as well as others, ſeeing they are choſen and called to this Dignity and Privilege of being the Sons of God, and Members of his Church, and Partakers of the Bleſſings of the Covenant as well as others are.

Our Saviour appointed, that all his Diſciples ſhould be baptized in his Name, and thereby ſolemnly dedicated and engaged to his Service; *Mat.* 28. *Go, diſciple all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father*, &c. Now to be Diſciples or Children of God, or of the Church of Chriſt, are all Terms that are equivalent in Signification, or do mutually infer one another. And therefore by the foregoing Diſcourſe Children will come into the Number.

And when our Saviour hath appointed little Children to be brought unto him, and to be received in his Name, *Matth.* 19. 13, 14. How can we otherwiſe conclude but they ought to be baptized, when Baptiſm is a ſacred Rite appointed by him for ſuch a ſolemn receiving of thoſe that do belong to him?

And how can we better expreſs our ſelves than in the Words of the Office of Baptiſm, that ſeeing our Saviour hath ſhewn ſuch Affection to them, as to imbrace them in his Arms, and to lay his Hands upon them and bleſs them, *doubt ye not therefore, but earneſtly believe, that he favourably allows this charitable Work of ours in bringing Infants to his holy Baptiſm?* And if when they are brought to us to this End, we ſhould refuſe to receive them, we might well look for his Diſpleaſure and Cenſure, as thoſe were rebuked and blamed by him then that would have kept them from him.

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The Apoſtle argues with the Jews, to bring them to be baptized, *that the Promiſe* or Covenant *did belong to them, and to their Children*, and ſo alſo to the Gentiles *that were* then *afar off*, when they ſhould be called, and ſo conſequently to their Children: *Acts* 2. 38, 39. *Repent*, ſaith he, of your crucifying the Lord of Life, which muſt needs include or ſuppoſe a precedent Faith in him; repent *for Remiſſion* of this and other Sins, which ſhall then be forgiven to you, *and be baptized* for the ſealing of this Remiſſion; and ye ſhall partake of the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt likewiſe for the farther ſanctifying of you, and the enabling you to perform what ye are called unto: For you are God's Covenant-People, to whom the Promiſe is made, and to your Children likewiſe; and believing Gentiles, when they ſhall be called into the Church, and their Children alſo: And then *they* ſhall partake of *your* Privileges; ſo that as you are baptized for the Sealing and Confirmation of them, ſo ſhall your Children too. This Argument to them, both with reſpect to themſelves and little ones, muſt needs be of great Force. Repentance muſt go before in *them* that had thus grievouſly ſinned before they could partake of the Benefits of the Covenant, or have them ſealed to them in Baptiſm; but upon their Repentance and Faith the Covenant is confirmed to them, and to their Children likewiſe, and ſo by Baptiſm might be ſealed to them and to their Children alſo.

2. The Juſtice and Reaſonableneſs of the Baptiſm of Infants upon the Grounds aforeſaid, may appear from the Analogy of the Adminiſtration of Circumciſion to little Infants among the Jews (which was the firſt Token of the Covenant that God appointed) upon the very ſame Ground and Conſideration, as may be ſeen, *Gen.* 17. 7. *I will eſtabliſh my Covenant between me and thee, and thy Seed after thee in their Generations, for an everlaſting Covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy Seed after thee.* And *ver.* 9. *Thou ſhalt keep my Covenant therefore, thou and thy Seed after thee in their Generations.* And then follows the Inſtitution of Circumciſion; *ver.* 10, 11. *And ye ſhall circumciſe the Fleſh of your Foreskin, and it ſhall be a Token of the Covenant between me and you: And he that is eight Days old ſhall be circumciſed among you.* Becauſe God had choſen them, and taken them into Covenant, and into a near Relation to himſelf, as his peculiar People, ſo that they were thereby ſeparated and diſtinguiſh'd from all the reſt of the World, therefore he appointed that they ſhould have Circumciſion, as a Badg and Mark of this Call and Diſtinction, and for a Seal and Token of the Covenant between God and them. And when God hath continued the ſame Reſpect and Privilege to ſome Children now under the Goſpel, and hath appointed the Ordinance of Baptiſm to the ſame Ends and Purpoſe which all thoſe that are his People and called Ones ſhould partake of, is it not reaſonable to infer, that Children who are called to the ſame Privileges, and have the ſame Reſpect from

from God, ſhould partake of Baptiſm, as the common viſible Badg of his choſen and peculiar People, and as a Mark and Seal of God's Covenant now, as they did formerly partake of Circumciſion, which was the Token of the Covenant for the time being? If Baptiſm be of the ſame Uſe, and to the ſame purpoſe now as Circumciſion was then, is it not a reaſonable Concluſion, that Infants ſhould now partake of Baptiſm to the ſame end to which formerly they did partake of Circumciſion, there being the ſame Ground for this as there was for that, *viz.* God's Election of them into the Number of his peculiar People, and his Covenant with them?

For the Covenant, as we have heard, is the ſame for Subſtance, both then and now; and there are the ſame Parties in the Covenant now as there were then, as hath been proved likewiſe; and Baptiſm is the Seal of that Covenant now which Circumciſion was a Seal of then; and the Church is radically and fundamentally the ſame both then and now; and Circumciſion then, and Baptiſm now, the Sacraments of Initiation into it. And what though the Token be changed, as long as the Covenant, Church, Church-members and Parties in it are the ſame, and little Children are of the Number, it is reaſonable ſure that they ſhould partake of that Mark and Token now, which is for Initiation into the viſible Church, and for Confirmation of the Covenant, as they did of that which was then ſo for the time being; and ſo, that now Children ſhould be baptized, as then they were circumciſed, there being the ſame Ground and Reaſon for the Adminiſtration of either of the Signs, *viz.* their being alike Church-members, and Parties in the ſame Covenant.

The Apoſtle tells us, that Circumciſion was a Seal on God's Part of ſpiritual Benefits to *Abraham*, and ſo conſequently to all Believers then; *Rom.* 4. 11. *And he received the Sign of Circumciſion, a Seal of the Righteouſneſs of the Faith, which he had being yet uncircumciſed; that he might be the Father of all them that believe, though they be not circumciſed, that Righteouſneſs might be imputed to them alſo.* Juſt as Baptiſm is now of the Remiſſion of Sin, and the taking off the Guilt of Death which cleaved to it, and ſo of Juſtification, which is the ſame in other Terms with that Righteouſneſs of Faith then imputed to *Abraham*.

And ſo Circumciſion was a Sign, on the Part of *Abraham* and his Seed, of their Covenanting and Obligation to be the Lord's, and to labour after the Circumciſion of the Heart, as Baptiſm is now a Mark or Seal of Obligation to the Service of Chriſt. Hence *Moſes* exhorts the People, *Deut.* 10. 16. *Circumciſe the Foreskin of your Hearts, and be no more ſtiffnecked*; as being that which was ſignified by the outward Circumciſion. And ſo the Prophet *Jeremy*, in like manner, *chap.* 4. 4. *Circumciſe your ſelves to the Lord, and take away the Foreskins of your Hearts:* This being that, it ſeems, which the Circumciſion in the Fleſh obliged them to. And for this God's Aſſiſtance is pro-

promiſed them in the ſame Form of Words; *Deut.* 30. 6. *The Lord thy God will circumciſe thy Heart, and the Heart of thy Seed, to love the Lord thy God,* &c. So that Circumciſion then was for circumciſing them to the Lord, that is, for the Dedication of them to his Service, as their God: Juſt as Baptiſm is now, for the like ſolemn Dedication and Conſecration of them to the Service of Chriſt, and to depart from all the Filthineſs of Sin, and a Sign of Obligation and Engagement of Chriſtians to the ſame. Yea the Apoſtle ſhews, that as the chief thing in Baptiſm now is not the putting away the Filth of the Fleſh, but the waſhing of Regeneration, which is ſignified thereby; ſo the Circumciſion of the Heart was the principal thing intended in Circumciſion, without which that in the outward Ceremony was of no Value; *Rom.* 2. 28. *For he is not a Jew, that* God will accept as the Seed of believing *Abraham, which is one outwardly only* in the Ceremony; *neither is that* the acceptable *Circumciſion which is outward in the Fleſh; but he is a Jew,* accepted by God as his Peculiar, *which is one inwardly: and Circumciſion is that of the Heart in the Spirit, and not in the Letter, whoſe Praiſe is not of Men, but of God,* who ſearcheth the Heart.

In a word, the Apoſtle intimates to us elſewhere, that Baptiſm is now in all theſe Reſpects of the ſame Uſe and Significancy with Circumciſion then; ſo that what Circumciſion was then, Baptiſm is now; and there is no need of Circumciſion now to theſe Ends, becauſe Baptiſm doth fully ſerve to the ſame Ends, and therefore is enough without Circumciſion. This is the Apoſtle's Argument; *Col.* 2. 10, 11, 12. *Ye are compleat in him,* that is, Chriſt: *In whom alſo ye are circumciſed with the Circumciſion made without Hands, in putting off the Body of the Sins of the Fleſh, by the Circumciſion of Chriſt;* and have the outward Seal thereof too in Baptiſm, being *buried with him in Baptiſm.* So that you have no need now of the literal Circumciſion, having both the inward Grace of it by Chriſt, and the outward Seal of it likewiſe in Baptiſm, as ye had before in the literal Circumciſion. And therefore hereupon the believing Jews might well be ſatisfied with the Aboliſhment of Circumciſion, when Baptiſm ſerved to the ſame Ends and Purpoſes. And it is no wonder therefore that the Jewiſh Believers that had a right Underſtanding of things, acquieſced in having the Ordinance of Baptiſm to the ſame Uſe as Circumciſion was; and ſo that they made no Debate nor Quarrel about the want of an outward Sign to their Seed, becauſe they took Baptiſm to be of that Uſe that Circumciſion was before, which their Children likewiſe might to the ſame purpoſe partake of. Whereas when Circumciſion was aboliſh'd, which they were ſo fond of, becauſe it was the Token of the Covenant between God and them, if Baptiſm had not come in its ſtead to the ſame purpoſe, it would have been a wonder if we ſhould not have heard of many Heats about the Loſs of it. And theſe things being thus ſtated, ſure Infants can be

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no more uncapable of Baptiſm now than they were of Circumciſion formerly, but will have a juſt and reaſonable Right to it.

I acknowledg yet that there were ſome Ends in the Appointment and Adminiſtration of Circumciſion then, which are not common to Baptiſm now, *viz.* in reſpect of the Meſſiah, who was promiſed and foreſhewn thereby to come into the World by Generation: And ſo that was a Mark made upon that Part of the Body which is inſervient to Generation; and to that end was put upon *that* People, of whom the Meſſias was to be born, to keep them as a ſeparate People from all other Nations, that the Pedigree of the Meſſiah might be the more diſtinctly and ſecurely preſerved. And this end of Circumciſion ceaſing when the Meſſiah appeared, therefore in that Reſpect it expired of it ſelf. But yet neither of theſe, nor both together, were the chief or only Ends of Circumciſion, as is clear from what hath been diſcours'd; but we ſee likewiſe, it had a ſpiritual Significancy and Deſign to other Purpoſes; and in theſe Reſpects was of the ſame Uſe then, as Baptiſm is now; and ſo they both have the ſame Subjects, *viz.* Infants as well as grown Perſons. And we are informed, that *that* was aboliſh'd becauſe of the Burdenſomneſs of it, *Acts* 15. 10. And Baptiſm now ſucceeds in the room, as a new Inſtitution to the ſame ſpiritual Ends, and as a more gentle Adminiſtration, which would be leſs offenſive and troubleſom to the Gentile World than *that* was or would have been.

And as for the Apoſtle's Diſputes againſt Circumciſion, it was in the Senſe that the Jews took it, as Circumciſion in the Letter only, and as a Part of the Political Law of *Moſes*, into which it was afterward incorporated, and from the keeping of which they expected to be juſtified before God, and that with reſpect chiefly to its outward Performances. Againſt this Senſe and Abuſe of it the Apoſtle diſcourſeth, not as it was a Sign or Token of the Abrahamical Covenant, and as it was in its true End a Seal of the Goſpel-Promiſes contained in it. So that the Apoſtle's Diſpute againſt it in the corrupt Jewiſh Senſe, doth no way enervate or invalidate that which we have ſaid concerning the true End and principal Deſign of it. And therefore it no way deſtroyeth the Parallel or Analogy between Baptiſm and *that*, in Reſpects of the Ends mentioned.

As for that Objection which ſome have made againſt the Uſefulneſs of Baptiſm, in compariſon of Circumciſion, to Children, becauſe Baptiſm is but a tranſient Sign, and leaves no ſignificant Impreſſion behind it, to inſtruct Perſons what was done to them in their Infancy; whereas Circumciſion is an abiding Character in their Fleſh, which they themſelves may take notice of. *Anſwer*, that in Reſpect of the Significancy of either it is all one; for Children did no more underſtand at that Age what was done to them, or why, than Infants do now: And when they come of Age, they could not know how

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that Mark came, or what that was intended for, but by the Inſtruction of others, whom they muſt be beholden to to know the meaning of it. And ſo Children may know now as well by the Information of others, and by the Practice thereof that they ſee in the Church, both that they were baptized, though they perceive no Mark of it remaining; and alſo the End that they were baptized for. And therefore where is the Difference?

As for the Objection, that Males only were ordered by God to bear the Token of the Covenant then; it doth not therefore follow by this Analogy, that they only ſhould bear it now, becauſe now there was no ſuch Reſtraint laid upon the Adminiſtration, but it was to belong to both Males and Females; and yet the Analogy in other Reſpects holds good.

3. That Infants being now, as well as formerly, owned and called by God into a near Relation to himſelf, as his Children, and Members of his Church, ſhould therefore be baptized, may be argued from this, that we read of thoſe that were baptized upon this very Ground or Conſideration, *viz.* of their being choſen and called by God to be his People and Children, and of the Church of Chriſt, and partaking of his ſpiritual Gifts and Bleſſings. So that if little Children do appear to be as much reſpected and called by him to the ſame Privileges as thoſe grown Perſons that were ſo, and thereupon were baptized: then little Children, for the ſame Reaſon, ought to be baptized alſo, there being the very ſame Reaſon and Ground for Baptiſm in them as there was in grown Perſons.

Now, I ſay, we ſhall find, that the Reaſon and Ground upon which the Apoſtles did adminiſter Baptiſm to grown Perſons, was the Evidence they had of their being taken and brought by God into the Number of his own peculiar Covenant-People and Children, and ſo partaking of his Bleſſings: For whenſoever they perceived any the leaſt Token or Evidence of this, they preſently adminiſtred Baptiſm to them, as it were for a viſible Enrollment and Admittance of them, being ſo owned by God, into the Number of his People, and to have a Partnerſhip in his viſible Church.

Thus when the Holy Ghoſt was poured in an extraordinary manner upon *Cornelius* and his Company, this being a Token of God's having alike Reſpect to them, as to the believing Jews; *Acts* 10. 46. *Then anſwered* Peter, *Can any one forbid Water, that theſe ſhould not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghoſt, as well as we?* By this he perceived, that he was not to look upon them any longer common or unclean, as others were that God had not ſhewn ſuch a diſtinguiſhing Reſpect unto; and therefore he thought Baptiſm could not be denied unto them, whom he ſaw that God had by this Mark ſeparated and ſet apart for himſelf. And in his Apology which he makes for himſelf about that Matter, he expreſſeth it in more general Terms, *chap.* 11. 17. *Foraſmuch as God hath given them the like Gift, as he did unto us, who*

believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God? Intimating to us, that they partaking of the same distinguishing Gift of God as others did, whereby God's singular Respect to them did appear, that they should partake of the same Ordinance of Baptism likewise with them; without requiring of them any further Confession of their Faith in Christ, that being it self a sufficient Evidence, that God had chosen them into the Number of his People; and therefore it was reasonably concluded, without any more ado, that they also should partake of the same Badg and Seal with them. And yet the Gift of the Holy Ghost, which was then poured on them, visibly consisted but in some extraordinary Endowments of speaking with Tongues, and thereby magnifying God, which the Apostle acquiesced in as an Evidence of God's distinguishing Respect to them. Now forasmuch as it also appears, though by other Evidence, as hath been shewn, that little Children in like manner owned and respected by God, as it appears that these were by *this* that was extraordinary; How can any Man then forbid Water, that they should not be baptized? For seeing God hath given them the like Gift, as he did unto them who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, what are we that we should withstand God? If the Evidence of their Sonship and Relation to God be as certain and firm, though not in the same way, why should they not then likewise be baptized for the like Reason?

For the Gift of the Spirit it self was for their Admission or Entrance into the Body or Church of Christ, as the Apostle sheweth; 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. *For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body.* And this being a Means and Evidence of their Admission into this Body, to this therefore the Baptism with Water was annex'd, as the visible Token or Ceremony thereof on the Churches Part. Now forasmuch as it appears, that Children are likewise of the Body of Christ, there is the same Reason that they should be baptized as well as those that were so, who were by the Spirit baptized into this Body.

For it appears likewise by the Apostle elsewhere, that Baptism doth belong in common to all those that are of Christ's Body, and upon that very Account of their being so: so that as it doth belong to others that are of this Body, so likewise it doth to Infants, as being of the same Body; *Eph.* 4. 4. *For there is one Body*, the one holy Catholick Church of Christ; *one Spirit*, that by his Gifts and Graces moves, quickens and rules it; *one* heavenly Inheritance, to the *Hope* of which they are called that are of this Body; *one Lord* that governs it; *one* Doctrine of *Faith* for the Rule of it; *one Baptism* for a sacramental Admission into it; *one God and Father of all*, who owns and receives the Members thereof as his Children. So that all that are of the Body of Christ (as Children are) are to be baptized, that they may be owned to be of the Number, and may be distinguish'd from all others that are not. So that as in the Old Testament, those within the Church are expressed by

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Circumciſed, and thoſe without by the *Uncircumciſed*: ſo by Proportion thoſe within the Church, as ſome Infants are, are to be *baptized*, and ſo to be reckoned of the Church; and they who are *not* baptized, to be accounted as *out* of the Church. *See* Rom. 3. 30. ch. 15. 8. Eph. 2. 11. Judg. 14. 3 Jer. 9. 25, 26.

Even Faith it ſelf is to bring us into the Relation of the Children of God, as the Apoſtle intimates, *Gal.* 3. 26. *For ye are all the Children of God by Faith in Chriſt Jeſus.* So that we may reaſonably conclude, that it was upon their Faith, as the Means and Evidence of their Adoption, that Believers themſelves were baptized: And foraſmuch as it appears, that little Children do partake of the Divine Adoption without Faith, as well as if they had Faith, there is the ſame Reaſon for their being baptized, as there was for the baptizing of thoſe that did partake of the Adoption through Faith: the Reaſon why they were baptized being their partaking of the Adoption, of which Faith was the Means and Evidence; and Baptiſm it ſelf was but for the ſealing of this Adoption to them, and of the Covenant that God makes with them, and for the viſible intitling them to the Bleſſings thereof.

4. There may at leaſt a probable Argument be taken for the Baptiſm of Infants, from the Account that we have of the baptizing of whole *Houſholds*, of all thoſe that are ſpoken of by Name, that are ſaid to have had Houſholds, when once the Maſter or Miſtreſs of the Family were baptized: When the Maſter or Miſtreſs of the Family were called and owned by God, and brought into the Church, it ſeems that all *theirs* were received likewiſe, who did not reject the Counſel of God againſt themſelves, as Infants could not do.

It hath been obſerved, that there are but nine in Scripture mentioned by Name to have been baptized beſides our Saviour, *viz. Simon Magus*, the Eunuch, St. *Paul*, *Cornelius*, *Lydia*, the Jailor, *Criſpus*, *Gaius*, and *Stephanus*. Among theſe, whether *Simon Magus* had any Houſhold is not mentioned: But the Eunuch was baptized on the Road, and ſo had none there: St. *Paul* was not married, and it is certain had no Houſhold where he was baptized: And whether *Gaius* had any when he was baptized is uncertain: But for all the other five, whoſe Houſholds are mentioned, it is likewiſe expreſs'd, or may be clearly inferred, that their Houſholds were baptized with them: As *Cornelius* and his Houſhold, *Acts* 10. *Lydia* and her Houſhold, *Acts* 16. 15. The Jailor and his, *ver.* 33. *Criſpus* and his, *Acts* 18. 8. And the Houſhold of *Stephanus*, 1 Cor. 1. 16. For God is pleaſed to have Reſpect to the Houſes of thoſe that are his, and do believe in him; as our Saviour ſaid of *Zaccheus*, Luke 19. 9. *This Day is Salvation come to this Houſe. For the Seed of the Righteous is bleſſed*, Pſal. 37. 26. *Mr.* W. A's *Addreſs to the N. C.*

Now the baptizing of whole Houſholds muſt needs import the baptizing of all within the Houſe: And it is ſtrange, if in all theſe Houſholds there ſhould be no Perſon under Years of Conſent to teſtify or profeſs their own Faith.

And if when *Abraham* and his Houſhold were circumciſed, his Infants were likewiſe comprehended; ſo when the Houſholds of all thoſe Perſons are mentioned to be baptized, that are ſaid to have had Houſholds, why ſhould we not as well conclude that their Infants likewiſe were baptized with them, as being comprehended in the ſame Appellation?

And this need not ſeem ſtrange, when we find how quickly and readily the Apoſtles baptized many Perſons upon the ſmalleſt Expreſſion of Conſent to the Faith of Chriſt, being willing to give all kind of Encouragement to their coming into the Church of Chriſt, when they had the leaſt probable Hope of their future perſiſting therein; as we ſee in their baptizing *Simon Magus*, and the Jailor and his Houſhold the ſame Night, and many thouſands the ſame Day that they firſt expreſs'd their Conſent. And therefore, I ſay, it need not ſeem ſtrange that they ſhould baptize the Infants likewiſe, or thoſe that were under the Age of Conſent in theſe Houſholds, ſeeing they might conceive as fair a Probability of their imbracing and profeſſing the Chriſtian Religion afterwards, by Means of their Parents Care in their Education, becauſe they uſe to bring up their Children in the ſame Religion they profeſs themſelves.

But for a further Confirmation of this, and of the Uſe and Practice of Infant-Baptiſm in the time of our Saviour and the Apoſtles, there are two conſiderable Points of Hiſtory taken notice of by the Learned, which will give a great Light to this Matter.

Vid. *Dr.* Walker's *Plea for Infant-Baptiſm*, ch. 30. *Dr.* Hammond's *Defence*, Sect. 3.

1ſt. The firſt is that which is taken out of the moſt authentick Records of the Jewiſh Writings, and thoſe Authors that are of greateſt Note among them: And it is this, that even before our Saviour's time it was the manner among the Jews to admit Proſelytes into the Jewiſh Church by three things, *Circumciſion, Sacrifice, and Baptiſm*, whatever were the Ground or Original of this Cuſtom, which is differently accounted for by learned Men: And Baptiſm was thought ſo neceſſary, that though one was circumciſed, yet if he were not baptized, he was not a true Proſelyte; which is delivered as a known Axiom by the *Gemara Babylonica*. But if it were a Woman, ſhe muſt only be baptized, and bring a Sacrifice: And there being a Statute among the Jews, *Numb.* 15. 15. *That one Ordinance ſhould be both for themſelves, and for the Stranger*, or Proſelyte, *that ſojourned among them*; therefore what they did to their Proſelytes, they did alſo to themſelves. So that as the Jewiſh *Talmud* and *Gemara* ſay, *the Iſraelites themſelves do not enter into Covenant but by theſe three things, Circumciſion, Baptiſm and Peace-offering*. And as this was the Manner and Cuſtom of admitting grown Proſelytes, ſo alſo their Infant-Children, if they had any, were baptized likewiſe, as the *Gemara* ſaith. And ſo alſo *Maimonides*, an Author of great Account among the Jews, upon condition that there was Security given for the Education of the Chil-

Children in the Jewiſh Religion, that when they came to Age they might not renounce it. And this their Reception of Proſelytes in this way, was eſteemed among them to be a kind of *Regeneration* or new Birth, they being brought and engaged thereby to a new Religion and a new Life.

Now if this be true, as the Jewiſh Records do inform us, and we have no Reaſon to doubt of, it may ſeem leſs ſtrange that the Baptiſm of *John* Baptiſt was ſo readily complied with, and that there was no more Noiſe and Stir about it; it being in it ſelf, for the Matter of it, no new Inſtitution, but what had been uſual and cuſtomary among them: and *John*'s Deſign in it being only to adminiſter it to a different End than before, that is, as a Ceremony demonſtrative of, and engaging to Repentance, againſt the appearance of the Kingdom of Meſſiah; whereas it was before obſerved only as an initiating Rite into the Jewiſh Religion and Covenant.

And when our Saviour came and baptized, or ordered his Diſciples ſo to do, it was only a Tranſlation of an old Cuſtom to a new End, *viz.* to admit and receive Perſons into the Religion of *Meſſiah*, who was now come: And it being no more for the Matter of it than what was done before, it ſeems probable that our Saviour grounded his Reproof of *Nicodemus* upon his Ignorance of the Cuſtom of his own Nation, and the Senſe that they put upon it; *John* 3. 10. *Art thou a Maſter of* Iſrael, *and knoweſt not theſe things?* For that might well ſeem very ſtrange, that a Perſon of his Condition ſhould not underſtand the Phraſe of his own Nation, in which our Saviour ſpake to him, though including alſo more in it when he ſaid, *Except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*

But to conclude this, it having been, as we ſee, the manner before among the Jews, to receive the Infants of Proſelytes, as well as grown Perſons, into the Jewiſh Church, by this Ceremony of Baptiſm, unleſs our Saviour had prohibited the ſame to them; how could the Apoſtles otherwiſe underſtand, but when our Saviour ordered them by this Ceremony to admit Chriſtian Proſelytes, they ſhould likewiſe receive their Infants, as the manner had been before in the Reception of Jewiſh Proſelytes among themſelves? Which makes it therefore highly credible, that it was accordingly done: For there is no manner of Appearance of any Alteration made by our Saviour, as to the Subjects, but only as to the End and Intent of this Practice or Cuſtom, which only gave it the Form of a new Inſtitution.

Nor need it ſeem at all ſtrange that our Saviour ſhould adopt this Cuſtom and Practice into the Chriſtian Religion and Church, that was before in uſe in the Jewiſh, it being not in the leaſt our Saviour's Deſign to depart as far as he could from the Jewiſh Church, but rather to build as much as might be with their Materials in the Erection of the Chriſtian, and to conform it after their old Platform; as hath been ſhewn by learned Men in ſeveral Inſtances,

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and particularly in the other Sacrament of the Lord's Supper it ſelf. And as for thoſe Rites and Cuſtoms of the Jews which were aboliſh'd, the Reaſon thereof was not merely becauſe they were Jewiſh, but either becauſe they were ſuch as were fulfilled in Chriſt and Chriſtianity, as the Antitype and Subſtance of them; or becauſe they were ſuch as were inconſiſtent with the Nature of a manly, free and univerſal Church, ſuch as Chriſt intended his ſhould be, in oppoſition to the Legal Pedagogy and ſervile Nature of the Jewiſh, and for the breaking down the Partition-Wall betwixt Jew and Gentile, and the aboliſhing the Enmity of Ordinances, that the Religion of Chriſt might become more paſſable among the Gentile World, to whom if it had been clogged with ſo many Ordinances as in the Jewiſh Church, it would have become odious and ridiculous. Nor yet can it be ſaid e're the more, that the Baptiſm of *John*, or of our Saviour, was of Man, and not from Heaven, becauſe it was a Jewiſh Cuſtom; foraſmuch as the Deſign of it is now changed, and the Form of a new Inſtitution is ſtamp'd upon the old Matter.

Case of Infant-Baptiſm, *London*, 1683. Mede's 1ſt *Book*, *Diſc.* 51. 2d *Book*, c. 4. *Dr.* Hammond's *Defence of Infant-Baptiſm*, p. 25, 25.

2*dly*. Another conſiderable Point of Hiſtory relating to this Matter, is with reſpect to the times after our Saviour and the Apoſtles, and that is this; It appears by the antient Writings of the Fathers of the Chriſtian Church in the next Ages, that Infant-Baptiſm was then the general Practice of the Chriſtian Church, and was ſo obſerved, as being derived from the Apoſtles themſelves: And there is no one Writer in any of the firſt Ages of the Chriſtian Church, that does at all oppoſe it as unlawful, or ſpeak of it as a novel Practice; but even thoſe that argue againſt it as leſs convenient, yet do allow by their Diſcourſe, that it was then the general Practice of the Church, and do not in the leaſt contradict *that*, or bring any Argument againſt it, as being a new Invention, which if it had been, had above all other Arguments been moſt proper for their Purpoſe.

Adverſus Hæreſ. l. 2. c. 39. p. 192.

Irenæus Biſhop of *Lions*, who lived in the next Age after the Apoſtles, ſaith, that Chriſt came to ſave all by himſelf; *Omnes inquam*, ſaith he, *qui per eum renaſcuntur in Deum, Infantes, & parvulos & pueros, & juvenes & ſeniores:* All, I ſay, that are born again to God, Infants, and little ones, and Boys, and young Men and old. Which Phraſe of being *born again to God*, in the Sacred and Eccleſiaſtical Dialect, is but another Expreſſion for Baptiſm, or doth certainly imply or infer it.

Lib. de Bapt. c. 18.

Tertullian, who lived but a very little after the ſaid *Irenæus*, from a certain Notion that he had of the Uſe and Ends of Baptiſm, thought indeed that it was more convenient to defer it: And ſo he was likewiſe for the deferring of the Baptiſm of Virgins till they were married; and gives the ſame Reaſon for both, *For fear leſt they ſhould be tempted to renounce Chriſt after Baptiſm:* But then by other Paſſages it appears, that he thought the Baptiſm of Infants, as well as of others, abſolutely neceſſary in caſe of extream Danger. And by

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his very Arguments againſt the Practice of Infant-Baptiſm in ordinary Caſes, he ſheweth, that it was then commonly practiſed; and doth not produce any one Argument to prove either its Unlawfulneſs or Novelty; which if he could have done, would have been a much ſtronger Argument than any he hath uſed to confirm his Opinion; and was ſo obvious, that a Perſon of his Learning and Sagacity could not have overlook'd it; and which therefore being not urged by him, is a manifeſt Indication, that he had no ſuch Opinion of its being either novel or unlawful, though for other Reaſons in his ſingular Opinion he thought better to defer it.

Origen, who lived very little after him, ſpeaks again and again of the Baptiſm of little Children in that Age, and ſaith expreſly, *that the Church hath received it as a Tradition from the Apoſtles*, to give Baptiſm to little ones. In Levit. Homil. 8. In Luc. Homil. 14. In Epiſt. ad Rom. lib. 5. par. 2. p. 543. Edit. Baſil.

St. *Cyprian* Biſhop of *Carthage*, a very ſmall time after this, was a great Admirer of *Tertullian*, whom he often uſed to call his Maſter. But the Evidence for Infant-Baptiſm was ſo clear to him, that he declares for the baptizing of Infants, even *recens nati*, thoſe that were juſt born: And there were ſixty ſix Biſhops joined in Council with him, who agreed in the ſame Opinion, and ſent it as their common Reſolution to *Fidus*, who thought that Baptiſm ought to be deferred at leaſt to the eighth Day, according to the Law of Circumciſion. Epiſt. ad Fidum.

In the next Age lived *Athanaſius*, who again and again makes mention of Infant-Baptiſm, and lays a great Streſs upon it. Q. 114. ad Antiochū. Tom. 2. p. 337. Ed. Paris.

Much about the ſame time *Gregory Nazianzen* lived, who though his Opinion was, that where it could be ſafely deferred, it was better to let it alone till Children were three or four Years old, and were able to anſwer the Interrogatories that then uſed to be put to thoſe that were baptized; yet doth he vehemently urge, that in caſe of Danger they ſhould be baptized in their Infancy, and took his Reaſon from the Circumciſion of Children at the eighth Day, and from the ſaving of the firſt-born in *Goſhen* by the Sign of the Blood on the Lintel of the Door and the two Side-poſts: and ſaith, *that though Infants be not ſenſible either of the Gain or Loſs of it, yet that it is better, in caſe of Danger, that they be ſanctified without the Senſe of it, than that they be let alone uninitiated and unconſigned.* Orat. 40. de Bapt.

St. *Chryſoſtom* is plain for it in the Beginning of the next Age, and ſaith, *For this Cauſe*, that is, beauſe there are ſo many Benefits of Baptiſm, *we baptize Children though they have not Sin.* Homil. ad Neophylos Vid. *Dr.* Hammond's Defence of Infant-Baptiſm, *p.* 104.

And St. *Auſtin* ſpeaks of it in many Places, and urgeth it as an Argument againſt the *Pelagians*, for the Proof of Original Sin, which they denied. And it is very obſervable, that they in their Anſwer to him never denied the Lawfulneſs of that which he preſs'd ſo upon them, nor yet the Univerſality of the Practice,

Practice, or the Antiquity of it in the Church of God: But rather on the contrary owned it for an Apoſtolical Tradition, and practiſed it themſelves, though for other Reaſons than that for which it was urged by St. *Auſtin*. Theſe were very ſagacious Adverſaries, and would eaſily have diſcovered the Innovation of the Practice, if ſuch it had been, by which they might have beſt put off any Argument that could from it have been produc'd againſt them.

vid. Voſſ. de Bapt. cap. 14. & Caſſand. Teſtim. veter. de Bapt. parvulorum.

To theſe might be added many other Teſtimonies out of St. *Ambroſe* and St. *Jerome* in that Age; and alſo others in the following Ages. So vain is the Pretence of ſome Anabaptiſts, that *Pope Innocent* was the firſt that introduced this Practice into the Church. And as vain is what they produce from ‖ *Walafridus Strabo*, and *Ludovicus Vives*, the eldeſt of which lived ſome Ages later than the Fathers before mentioned: It is in vain, I ſay, what they produce from them againſt the Practice of it in the Church in the former Ages, when we have ſuch clear Teſtimonies from thoſe Ages for it, and when theſe Authors give no Proof at all of their Opinion by which the Reader may make any Judgment about it.

‖ Whiſtons *Anſwer to Mr.* Danvers, *c.* 1.

Now from what hath been thus diſcours'd about the Judgment and Practice of Antiquity in this Matter, ſo near the Age of the Apoſtles, and that agreeably to the Practice of the Jewiſh Church in their admitting of Proſelytes and their Children alſo by Baptiſm, is it not a fair and reaſonable Inference, to conclude that this was the Practice alſo of the Apoſtles between, and was as old as the Churches that they planted, and was derived to the ſucceeding Ages from them? For if this had been a new upſtart Invention, or had been brought in by falſe Teachers, and eſpecially if it had been of ſuch a peſtiferous Nature, as the Anabaptiſts pretend, and had all been but profane Trifling and Mockery, it is not eaſy to be imagined how it ſhould ſo early and univerſally obtain in the Chriſtian Church, and that it ſhould not be more vehemently oppoſed, and the Mockery, Profaneneſs and Peſtilency of it diſcovered, as that of other Hereſies was. *Had the Churches erred, they would have varied*, ſaith *Tertullian*; *but what is one and the ſame among them all*, (as this of Infant-Baptiſm was) *Non eſt erratum ſed traditum*; doth not come from Error but Apoſtolical Tradition. And ſo St. *Auſtin* upon this very Subject, *That which the univerſal Church doth hold, and was never inſtituted by Councils, but was always retained in the Church, we moſt rightly believe to have deſcended from nothing elſe than Apoſtolical Tradition.* And ſuch was the caſe of Infant-Baptiſm.

Vid. *Dr.* Walker's *Plea for Infant Baptiſm*, c. 27.

And this Cuſtom and Practice is ſtill continued in the Churches of Chriſt, though of ſeveral Denominations, unto this Day. All the Proteſtant Confeſſions of *Helvetia*, *Bohemia*, *Belgia*, *Anſpurg*, *Saxony*, *Wittenberg*, *Sweveland*, *France*, and *Piedmont*, do univerſally give their Teſtimony to it. And Hiſtories give us the ſame Account of the Practice of it among the *Ruſſians*, *Muſ-*

Muſcovites; the Chriſtians of St. *Thomas* in *India*; thoſe in *Syria*, *Cyprus*, *Meſopotamia*, *Babylon*, *Paleſtine*; amongſt the *Cofti* in *Egypt*; the *Abaſſins* in *Africa*; the *Armenians* in *Turky*; the *Maronites* inhabiting *Aleppo*, *Damaſcus*, *Tripoly* of *Syria*, *Cyprus*, and *Mount Libanus*. And many of theſe Churches are at vaſt Diſtance one from another, and therefore can have but very little Intercourſe or Communication one with another. And as for the *Abaſſine* and *Indian* Churches, they ſeem in all Probability to be Original Plantations, and not to have derived their Faith and Practice from any other Churches; and yet all retain and continue the Practice of baptizing Infants.

Theſe things one would think ſhould be enough to ſway with all modeſt Perſons: And they would learn not to prefer the new upſtart Opinions of thoſe, who becauſe of the Smalneſs of their Number are fain to call themſelves the *little Flock*, before the univerſal conſentient Practice of all the Churches of Chriſt beſides in the World. An humble Perſon ſhould far more highly eſteem of Godly Antiquity and the Univerſal Church, than of ſuch late and novel Singularity.

Objections *againſt Infant-Baptiſm anſwered.*

HAving thus, with all poſſible convenient Brevity, endeavoured to clear up and confirm the Doctrine and Practice of Infant-Baptiſm, I ſhall now conſider the Objections that uſe commonly to be raiſed againſt it, and ſhall endeavour to give them a ſatisfactory Anſwer.

Object. 1. *That Infants are not capable of the Ends of Baptiſm; that it doth them no Good, but they are as well without it as with it, becauſe there is no Benefit that they can receive thereby.*

Anſw. The contrary to this is moſt true. For,

1. They are capable of Baptiſm, as it is an outward Badg or Mark of their Relation to God, as his Children and peculiar People, and of God's gracious Reſpect to them, and owning them for ſuch; and ſo as it is a viſible Rite of their Admiſſion into the viſible Church of Chriſt. This is one of the Ends of Baptiſm, and Infants are capable of this, becauſe for this End it may be adminiſtred to thoſe that are meerly paſſive, and do not underſtand any thing of the Matter: As Infants are capable of Civil Adoption, and of being entred into any Family, Tribe, College, or other Society, by ſuch a Rite as ſhall be appointed for that end. And thus Infants in the Jewiſh Church were baptized to this end, together with their proſelyted Parents, as we have ſeen before: and we do not find that ever any of the Prophets, or our Saviour, or

the Apoſtles, did find fault upon the Account of Infants Incapacity, or otherwiſe; therefore we may conclude, that they were capable of Baptiſm, and that their Baptiſm was likewiſe well approved of. And ſo by God's own Appointment and Inſtitution Infants were circumciſed to the aforeſaid Ends and Purpoſes. And how are they uncapable then of Baptiſm to the ſame Ends to which they were capable of Circumciſion?

2. Infants are capable of Baptiſm, as it is a Sign, or Note, or Seal, on God's or Chriſt's Part, to aſſure us of his gracious Favour to us, and to conſign over to us the Benefits of the Covenant of Grace. Thus Infants are capable of Baptiſm, as it is a Mark or Seal of the Remiſſion or doing away that original Guilt and Obligation to Death, which they derived from the firſt *Adam*, and of their being brought into a new State of Regeneration and Life by Chriſt Jeſus. And ſo as it is a Seal of the Promiſe and Gift of the Spirit for the ſanctifying and renewing them hereafter; though for the preſent they underſtand nothing of it: For it is ſufficient alſo for this, that they be meerly paſſive in the Adminiſtration. As Baptiſm is to the Adult a Sign or Seal of the Remiſſion or waſhing away of that original Guilt which they have from *Adam*, and alſo of that which they have contracted by their own actual Sin; ſo may Baptiſm be a Sign or Seal of the waſhing away of the original Guilt to Infants derived from *Adam*, though they have no Guilt at all of any actual Sin of their own to be remitted or waſh'd away. And yet as Baptiſm is a Sign or Seal of the new Covenant for the Remiſſion of all Sin to Believers, not only of what is paſt, but alſo of what is to come, when they come to repent of it, and to perform the Terms of the Goſpel required to ſuch Remiſſion; ſo may Baptiſm be to Infants a Sign or Seal of the Remiſſion of all the actual Sin that ſhall ever be committed by them, upon their future performing of the ſame Terms. And ſo as Baptiſm is to the Adult a Sign or Seal of their being brought into a new Regenerate State, and of having a Right to Life by virtue of their Adoption, their Sin being done away by the Blood of Chriſt; ſo may it likewiſe be to Infants a Sign and Seal of God's gracious Favour in giving them a Right to the Heavenly Inheritance. As Infants, by virtue of any Civil Adoption, may be Heirs to a Temporal Eſtate, and are capable of any Acts of Favour from Man, and to be inſtated in any Privileges, before they come to underſtand what they are. As ſuppoſe the King ſhould ſend for a Traitor's Child out of the Cradle, and in the Preſence of ſeveral Perſons aſſembled for that purpoſe, ſhould ſay, *You know the Blood of this Child is attainted by his Father's Treaſon, and by Law he hath forfeited all Right to his Anceſtors Eſtate and Titles, and is quite undone, though he be not ſenſible of his wretched Condition: But I will pardon this Infant freely, and here I reſtore him to all his forfeited Rights: I juſtify him freely, and declare my ſelf reconciled unto him, and moreover do adopt him into my Royal*

Caſe of Infant-Baptiſm, p. 34.

Royal Family, and do ſettle part of my Dominions upon him; and as a confirmatory Sign of this my Reſpect unto him, I do order and command before you all, that he be waſhed with pure Water, to ſignify that he is cleanſed from his original Attainder and Corruption of Blood, and that I am perfectly reconciled unto him. Who would ſay that this were an inſignificant or uſeleſs Sign, becauſe the Child did not underſtand the meaning of it? Or who could ſay that the Child, who was capable of the thing ſignified, *viz.* the removing the Attainder, and being veſted in a Right and Title to a noble Inheritance, ſhould be uncapable of the waſhing with Water for a Sign hereof? eſpecially conſidering that a bit of Fleſh was appointed and ordered by God to be cut off by Circumciſion, when the Child was but eight Days old, to the ſame Intent and Purpoſe, though he underſtood as little of the meaning of that, as Infants do of the meaning of Baptiſm now for this end.

3. Infants are capable of Baptiſm, as it is a Mark or Sign on our part of their Dedication to God, and to the Service of Jeſus Chriſt, and of their entrance into, and coming under a Covenant-Engagement to be the Lord's for the future, even whilſt they are *under* the Age of Conſent, to concur hereto by any Act of their own. As Infants are capable of being entred into a School or College, and of wearing a Badg belonging to it, in order to future Inſtruction and Learning, though at preſent they underſtand nothing of it. And as it is uſual by Wills and Contracts to bring Infants under an Obligation to perform certain Conditions when they come to Age. This is plain from the Covenant-Engagement, that the Seed of *Abraham* was brought under as well as *Abraham* himſelf, and received the Sign of Circumciſion to confirm this at eight Days old: For that Rite laid an Obligation upon them to obſerve all the Laws of *Moſes*, though the Rite was adminiſtred to them in their Infancy by the Act of their Parents, long enough before they themſelves came to Age of Conſent; *Gal.* 5. 3. *For I teſtify to every Man that is circumciſed, that he is a Debtor to do the whole Law.* Circumciſion, though primarily the Rite of the Abrahamical Covenant, yet being incorporated into the Political Law of *Moſes* alſo, and ſo was withal an obligatory Rite to the Obſervance thereof.

Thus alſo in like manner, *Deut.* 29. 11. The little ones are likewiſe ſaid to enter into the Covenant with the Lord, and into his Oath, as well as all the Men of *Iſrael.* And it hath been ever reckoned, that the Parents may lay an Obligation on the Children: as *Eſth.* 9. 27. *The Jews ordained and took upon them and upon their Seed, and upon all ſuch as joined themſelves unto them, ſo as it ſhould not fail that they would keep the Feaſts of* Purim. And thus *Hanna* dedicated *Samuel* to the Service of the Lord from the time of his weaning, 1 *Sam.* 1. 28. And *Samſon* was a Nazarite from the Womb, *Judg.* 13. 15. And the Covenant was made between *David* and *Jonathan*,

both for *themſelves and their Seed*, 1 Sam. 20. 42. And the Covenant that *Joſhua* and the Men of *Iſrael* made with the Gibeonites, obliged all their Poſterity. And thus, as hath been ſaid, all the Jewiſh Infants were conſecrated and devoted to God by the Rite of Circumciſion: For Children are look'd upon as Parts of their Parents; and what their Parents do for themſelves or them, eſpecially when they are in their Infant-ſtate, and under the Age of Conſent themſelves, is reaſonably eſteemed as laying an Obligation upon them, as if it were done by them, when the thing it ſelf is juſt and reaſonable, and may be beneficial to them. For though we cannot lay a Burden upon others without their own Conſent, yet we may procure a Favour for them, and oblige them to the Performance of certain Conditions for their future Participation thereof, when it is for their Benefit to be ſo obliged: Indeed if they will, they may afterwards renounce the Obligation, but then they muſt renounce and quit the Benefit too; which if it be conſiderable, there is no wiſe Man that is in his Wits will ever do, but will ſtand to the Obligation under which he is brought for his own Advantage, and will eſteem it a great Advantage that he was brought under it.

And now is all this no Benefit? *They ſhall be ſaved without it*, they will ſay. But what then? Is there nothing to be ever eſteemed a Benefit but Salvation it ſelf alone? Is all this that hath been ſaid of Infant-Baptiſm no Benefit?

Is it no Benefit to be enrolled thereby into the Number of God's peculiar People, to have the Mark and Badg of his Children, and to be reckoned amongſt thoſe that he hath called to a Covenant-relation to himſelf? Is it no Benefit to partake of the Rite of viſible Admiſſion into the Church of Chriſt? Is this no Privilege? no Benefit? If the contrary would be a great Evil, to be caſt out as common and unclean amongſt the reſt of the World, is it not then a Benefit to have the Badg and Mark of an holy Separation to God, as the People of his Adoption and Grace?

Is it no Benefit to partake of the Mark and Seal of the Bleſſings and Promiſes of God, of the Removal of the Guilt and Death which they were liable to by *Adam*, and of the Promiſe of the Spirit for their Regeneration and Sanctification, whoſe Aſſiſtance therefore, to that end, they may comfortably hope for, and expect from God, as they have need of it, whether there be any preſent Operation or Work of the Spirit upon them or no? And is it not a Benefit to them that they have a Seal and Aſſurance of the Forgiveneſs of all their actual Sins alſo afterwards, upon their Repentance and Return to God? As Baptiſm is a Benefit to grown Perſons, as it is a Sign and Pledg both of preſent and future Bleſſings; ſo it is alſo in the ſame manner to Infants, as being a Seal both of all thoſe Bleſſings which they have need of, or do partake of at preſent, and alſo of thoſe which they have or may have need of afterwards.

So

So that ſuppoſe they may be ſaved without it, yet this is a Mark or Seal of their Salvation if they die in their Infant-ſtate; and of all the Bleſſings and Privileges that belong to them now, or are to belong to them afterwards, if they live according to the Terms of the Goſpel, juſt in the ſame manner as it is to grown Perſons. So that if upon theſe Accounts it is a Benefit to grown Perſons, it is upon the ſame Account alſo a Benefit to Infants; that is, it is a Benefit both to one and the other, as far as a Sign, or Seal, or Pledg can be a Benefit.

And laſtly; Is it not a Benefit to partake of that Ordinance that is a Mark or Note of their early Conſecration and Devotedneſs to God, and to the Service of Chriſt, whereby they are brought betimes into a Covenant-Engagement to be his? For that this is ſo, hath been proved; and accordingly God ſo looks upon them; and thereupon there is to be all Care taken about their Chriſtian Education, that they may be inſtructed and brought up in the Knowledg of thoſe things which belong to the People and Children of God. And this will be uſeful to them as an Argument to prevail with them to live to God betimes, as they grow up, becauſe of the Oath and Covenant that they are ſo early entred into, and engaged in. This Conſideration indeed doth not affect them immediately, whilſt they are in their Infant-ſtate, but it may come to affect them as ſoon as any thing elſe can that is of ſuch a Nature, that is, as ſoon as their Reaſon comes to be of uſe to them: Whereas if this had not been done for them betimes, there would have wanted this Argument to deal with them. And it may be, it would have been very long before they themſelves might have been brought to conſent to enter into ſuch an Obligation, as we read it often was among many that yet were brought to the Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Faith in the Primitive Times: Some ſtaying off for this, ſome for that carnal Reaſon or Fear, for a long time, to the great Scandal of their Profeſſion: Some keeping off for fear of ſinning after Baptiſm, and ſo forfeiting the Grace of it, as they thought, thereby: Some from the Love of the World, and the Pleaſures thereof, being loth to part with their Sins and their vain Pleaſures, which they were ſenſible this obliged them to, notwithſtanding they owned themſelves Chriſtians: Some again deferring it out of want of Leiſure: Some pleading the Inconvenience of the Time; and others, becauſe they could not have it done in the Place they deſired, or by the Perſon they moſt affected: Some taking Exception at the mix'd Company they were to be baptized with: And ſome delaying it for fear of Perſecution from the Heathen: And ſome for fear leſt they ſhould be accounted *Tritheites:* Some on pretence that their Relations were not preſent: And ſome hanging back becauſe of the little Charge they did uſe to be at at that time. Theſe things gave Occaſion to ſuch vehement and ſharp Expoſtulations of the Fathers of that Age to reprove their Slackneſs, as are to be found

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found in their Writings. And how many do you think, upon one or other of these Pretences, there would be that would put it off in like manner still, if they were not baptized in Infancy; and it may be some would hardly ever bring themselves into so near a Covenant-Engagement to God at all? Whereas this being done for them so early in their Infant-state, it may be a powerful and prevailing Motive to engage them betimes to a sincere and upright walking with God, which otherwise they might not probably have been brought so soon to. If it be objected, *that this would be more apt to prevail with them, if it had been their own Act, when they came to Age.* It is plain by Experience, that those that are sincere, or have any Sense of Honour or Gratitude, among those that have been baptized in their Infancy, do hold themselves as much obliged by it, and do stand to the Obligation that they were then brought under, and as faithfully discharge it as any of those that are baptized at Age, and do look upon it a great Blessing, that they were brought under so early a Pre-engagement: And those that are not sincere, that are baptized at Age, do as little perform or discharge the Obligation that they brought upon themselves by an Act of their own, as any of those that were baptized in Infancy.

Object. 2. *That Infants are not capable of performing those Acts, or having those Conditions that are pre-required in Scripture, in Persons that are to be baptized. Forasmuch as they cannot learn, or be taught, or confess their Sins, or believe, or repent, or make any visible Profession of their doing so. And yet these things are required in Scripture of Persons that are to be baptized, and were always performed by Persons before the Apostles did baptize any. According to these and the like Texts;* Mark 16. 15, 16. Go into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature: he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved. *Matth.* 3. 6. They were baptized of him in *Jordan*, confessing their Sins. *Acts* 2. 38. Repent and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ. *And* ver. 41. They that gladly received his Word, were baptized. *Acts* 8. 12. When they believed *Philip* preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, they were baptized. *Ver.* 13. Then *Simon* himself believed, and was baptized. *And* ver. 36. The Eunuch said, See here is Water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? And *Philip* said, If thou believest with all thine Heart, thou mayst. *Acts* 18. 8. And many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized. *From these and such like Texts it is argued, that here is a Prohibition laid, and a Bar put against Infants Baptism, because they have no Reason or Understanding about what they ought to be or do, and can neither hear, learn, repent, or believe, or make Profession of either in their Infant-state, and therefore are not capable of Baptism, before the Administration of which these things are required and used to be done.*

Answ.

Answ. 1. That it is by vertue of that Covenant-relation to God as his People and Children, which God is pleased to admit Infants to, though themselves do not believe, they being the Seed or Pupils of profess'd Believers with whom this Covenant is made, and with their Seed and Family, that Baptism is to be administred to them. The Ground then which I build the Baptism of Infants upon, is God's Election or choosing of them, together with their believing Parents, or those that shall undertake for them to be his own peculiar Covenant-People; as likewise their Parents or Susceptors are. For this was always God's Method, and the way of his Grace, to own and receive the Children of his Covenant-People into the same Covenant with their Fathers, and so to treat with them, and to seal the Covenant and Promise to them, in the same manner, and by the same Rite as he did to their Parents. So that it is not the Childrens own Faith or Profession that qualifies them for Baptism, but it is God's Election or Choice of them for his People, though they have not actual Faith or Repentance of their own, upon their descending of such Parents, or being taken into such Families, or undertaken for by such Persons as stand in a Covenant-relation to God. And out of Respect to *them*, and in Prospect of that Religious Education that they shall afterwards receive from them, God is pleased to own them for his, and to confirm his Promise and Covenant to them: So that their Parents or Susceptors Faith is, as it were, vicariously imputed to them for a while, till they come to Years, and is reckoned accordingly for their Good, though they do not yet actually believe themselves, because hereafter they are to do it through their Parents Instruction. As the Children of the Levites of *a Month old are said to keep the Charge of the Sanctuary*, Numb. 3. 28. because they are so designed, and are to be brought up to it, and are in a near Capacity for it. And *Levi* is said, after a Sense, to have paid Tithes in *Abraham*, being in the Loins of *Abraham* when he paid it to *Melchizedek*, Heb. 7. 9.

And why should these things be thought unreasonable? If God is pleased to own and adopt little ones for his, why should our Eye be evil, because his is good? Or why rather should we not rejoice in his Mercy and Grace in behalf of our little ones?

If Infants may contract Guilt, or lie under an Obligation to Death by the Sin of their Parents, why may it not likewise be supposed through the Grace and Goodness of God by Christ, that they may be invested with a Right and Title to certain Privileges, and partake of the Mark and Seals of them through the Faith of others? So that as God *visits the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children unto the third and fourth Generation of them that hate him*; so he may also *shew Mercy to Thousands of them that love him and keep his Commandments*. And as some were brought to be healed by Christ (and were healed) through the Faith of others, so why should we not think that Infants Mat. 8. 13. Mark 9. 23. John 4. 50.

fants may partake of the Favour of God through Christ, and of the Badg or Sign of this Favour, with respect also to others Faith? So that the Faith of their Parents may be said to be *their* Faith, whilst they are in their Infant-state, they being as Parts of their Parents, and having no Use of Power, Understanding, or Will to provide for themselves, till they come to Years of Discretion: As the Parents Act in taking a House, or making a Bargain or Covenant, may be called the Child's Act, as no less beneficial and obliging to the Child than to the Parent, and binding the Child to the Performance of the same Conditions.

And what indeed is more common than for such things to be required of Parents before they be admitted to certain Privileges, that when they are admitted to, belong alike to their Children, though *they* could not do those things? Thus those of a foreign Nation must take the Oaths of Allegiance required to a Prince, before they become his naturalized Subjects, or partake of the Privileges of such; but after *they* have taken the Oaths, and are admitted to the Privileges of Naturalization, their Children also are admitted to the same Privileges, though *they* cannot take the Oaths; so that their Parents Act is imputatively theirs, or to their Benefit or Advantage. And so why may it not likewise be here? And as those that are born of Parents, that are admitted into a Corporation, shall partake of the Privileges likewise of that Corporation, which those that are born of other Parents shall not; so, if such be the Grace and Goodness of God, may the Infants of Covenant-Believers likewise partake of their Privileges, which the Infants of Heathens and Aliens are to have no Right unto. And yet all this while the Infants understand nothing of the Matter, but are vested in these Benefits before they come to Understanding.

2. Therefore, I say, as to those things that are said to be pre-required to Baptism, that either they have no need of them at all in their Infant-state, and so may be baptized without them; or by virtue of God's Grace and Covenant they have the same Benefit without them to qualify them for Baptism, which others have by them, and therefore may be baptized without them, though others cannot.

As for Regeneration in the most common Sense of the Word, it would be very rash in any to say, that they cannot have it in the Seed or Root of it: For who can tell what the Operations of the Holy Spirit are, or can be upon them? But though they should not, or could not have it in that Sense that we commonly take it, *viz.* for an internal Change and Sanctification of Heart and Mind; yet they have that which may denominate them regenerate Persons, and so they may be mark'd and signed as such, as being brought into a new and saving State by the Death of Christ, which they shall not fail of the Benefit of, unless they fall from it by their own actual Rebellion afterwards.

They

They may be ſaid to be delivered from the Death of Sin, or from the prevailing Power of that Death which Sin brought in, there being the Forgiveneſs or Diſſolution of that Death to them: And ſo they may be ſaid to be quickned together with Chriſt, and ſo to partake of a new Birth by being put into a new State, wherein they have through Chriſt as immediate a Right and Title to Salvation, as thoſe have, that have been regenerate in the common Acceptation of the Word. And why may they not then be qualified for the Sign or Seal hereof? For how can there be any more required to qualify for the Sign than for the Thing ſignified, which they poſſeſs, or have a preſent Right to?

And though they have not Faith properly ſpeaking, yet being brought into the ſame Condition of Sonſhip, and put into as immediate Capacity for Salvation, as adult Believers are through Faith, why ſhould they not partake of Baptiſm, which is the Seal of theſe Bleſſings, as they do? For though they have no Faith properly ſpeaking, yet being by Chriſt redeemed from Death, and put into a State of Sonſhip and Life, as actual Believers are, though without actual Faith, till actual Sin takes place, they may be numbred in reſpect of the Benefits of Faith with Believers. And if Believers are baptized, to ſeal the great Grace of Adoption to them through Faith, why ſhould not they likewiſe be baptized for the Sealing and Confirmation of the ſame Grace, ſeeing in that reſpect they may well be *reckoned* with Believers, as partaking of the ſame Favour with them, through the Grace and Covenant of God in Chriſt towards them? For what Faith is to adult Perſons through the Covenant and Grace of God in Chriſt, that the Covenant *it ſelf* is to Infants without Faith. And ſo what Baptiſm is to adult Perſons *upon* their Faith, that it may be to them *without* Faith, through God's Covenant with them alone by the Blood of Chriſt. So that upon the Account hereof they may full as well be baptized as thoſe that do believe, becauſe they have the ſame Privileges *without* Faith as Believers have *by* their Faith: It being not Faith it ſelf, or Profeſſion of Faith that is to be the immediate Ground of Baptiſm, but that Sonſhip or Relation to God, of which Faith is the Means or Evidence; and when this can be evidenc'd without Profeſſion of Faith, there being no neceſſity of that Profeſſion to qualify for Baptiſm, as was ſhewn before in *Cornelius* and his Company.

And then as for Repentance, while they are in their Infant-ſtate they have no need of it, and therefore may be baptized without it; they have no need of Repentance for Sin, becauſe they have no actual Sin to repent of; and therefore their want of Repentance can be no Bar to their Baptiſm. To thoſe indeed that have actually ſinned, Baptiſm is a Baptiſm of Repentance, ſignifying it already to be in ſome meaſure, and obliging to it farther. But where there is no actual Sin, there being no need of Repentance, it may be admi-

niſtred to them without Repentance, to oblige only to Holineſs and Purity of Life, and keeping of the Commands of God, which is a greater thing than Repentance, and which Repentance it ſelf is for, and to lead to, in thoſe that have ſinned. Thus the Baptiſm of *John*, though it was a Baptiſm of Repentance to others that had ſinned, and to that end he mainly preach'd it, yet was adminiſtred to our Saviour without Repentance, becauſe he had no need of Repentance, but he had perfect Holineſs, which was better than Repentance; and it was to him alſo a Sign of Obligation to Holineſs, though not to Repentance. So that it may be adminiſtred to thoſe that have no Repentance, becauſe they have no need of it in their preſent State; yet it may be adminiſtred to oblige to Holineſs, and to Repentance too hereafter, when they ſhall come to have actual Sin. And ſo it will be properly alſo to them a Baptiſm of Repentance, which it could no way be to our Saviour, and yet was adminiſtred to him; it is a Baptiſm to them, εἰς μετάνοιαν, to future Repentance.

But as for Profeſſion of Faith and Holineſs, which Infants cannot make: I anſwer, that the Baptiſm of Infants is not for Profeſſion of it, but for Obligation to it, which we have ſeen before they are capable of.

3. As for thoſe Texts then that are urged to ſhow what is prerequired of Perſons that are to be baptized: *I anſwer*, That they are ſpoken of, or to grown or adult Perſons that are capable of performing thoſe Acts, and were obliged to it, as the Condition or Proof of their Adoption; and they do only concern them, and no other but them. And therefore they are no Bar to the Baptiſm of Infants, whoſe Adoption or Sonſhip may otherwiſe be judged of, without theſe Acts. As for the Adult, we own and contend as much as they that make this Objection, that grown Perſons who are come to Years of Diſcretion, that had been Infidels and Unbelievers before, ought to be taught, and profeſs Faith and Repentance, before they be baptized; there being no Judgment by the Church to be made any other way, of God's receiving and owning them for his Children and Covenant-People. And this is as much as theſe Scriptures do prove or hold out to us, concerning this Matter; but they are no Rule for all the Subjects of Baptiſm: and as for Infants they are not at all concerned in them, and therefore their Baptiſm is not prohibited by them; there being not the ſame Qualifications required in them for Baptiſm, as there are in others. So that though there is a virtual Prohibition of the Baptiſm of grown Perſons, if they do not perform theſe Acts firſt, here is no Prohibition of the Baptiſm of Infants, though they do not perform them. For the meaning of all ſuch Expreſſions is to be judged of from the Nature and Capacity of thoſe Perſons to whom they are ſpoken. And therefore as by the Apoſtle's Words, 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 10. *They that will not work, neither ſhould they eat*; the Relief of lazy Drones is forbidden, that

can

can work and yet *will* not; but here is no Prohibition of the Relief or Sustentation of Infants, or those that cannot work. So by these Texts of Scripture that shew what is required of Persons to be baptized, impenitent Unbelievers that are come to Age, are prohibited from Baptism; but not Infants, there being other Grounds for their being baptized. The Baptism of Infants indeed cannot be concluded from these Texts, (and whoever said it could?) but we have shewn, there are other Scripture-Arguments for the Baptism of Infants: And these Texts, as they say nothing for it, so they say nothing against it, either directly or by Consequence: And therefore Infants may and ought to be baptized, notwithstanding what is said in these Texts.

Baptism, as we have heard, is an Ordinance of the same Use, and to the same Purpose, for the main, as Circumcision was, in the Respects mentioned. Now as Circumcision was administred to different Persons of different Ages, so may Baptism. Circumcision was administred to *Abraham* as a Seal of the Righteousness of that Faith which he had before given Evidence, and made Profession of; so is Baptism a Seal of the same to grown Believers now, upon their Profession of a like Faith with *Abraham*'s. But Circumcision was administred to *Isaac*, and was a Seal of the same Righteousness which he should have, without any such Profession made by him; and why may not Baptism then be administred to Infants now, without any such Profession made by them? For Circumcision was administred to *Isaac*, as being the Son of believing *Abraham*, by virtue of God's taking him into the same Covenant-relation with *Abraham*, without any such Profession of Faith required of him (which could not be) as was performed by *Abraham*. And why may not Baptism now be administred to Infants, as being the Seed of believing Parents, by virtue of the same Covenant made with them as with their Parents, though they cannot themselves profess the Faith as their Parents do? Circumcision and Baptism both were administred to Proselytes among the Jews after their Profession of the God of *Abraham*, but then were likewise administred to their Infants, and to the Infants of them, when they were grown up and came to have Children: And why may not Baptism be administred now to the Infants of profess'd Believers, though the Infants themselves can make no such Profession?

To *Mark* 16. 16. I answer particularly, because it is so much insisted upon; *He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.* From hence the Argument is, *That Faith must go before Baptism, because of the Order of the Words.* To which I might answer, that no Argument can reasonably be taken from thence in this Matter; for then by the same Rule, according to the Order of the Words in other Scriptures, Baptism should go first, before the Performance of some of those Acts which they say, should go before *it*: And so this Argument would be as much against them as for them. Thus *Mark* 1. 5.

Baptiſm is placed before Confeſſion of Sin, in the Relation of the Story there of thoſe that were baptized; *they were baptized, confeſſing their Sins.* And the Order of the Words in the Text that is objected eſpecially (as likewiſe that in *Acts* 2. 38. concerning Repentance and Baptiſm) is altogether inſignificant to the Matter in hand, becauſe here the Deſign of our Saviour is not to make Faith a neceſſary Prerequiſite to Baptiſm, (as neither the Apoſtles in that other Place to make Repentance prerequiſite to Baptiſm) but Faith and Baptiſm, that is, the Profeſſion of Faith by Baptiſm, prerequiſite to Salvation. But I rather anſwer as before, that this Text is nothing to the purpoſe, becauſe it hath no Reſpect to Children at all, and therefore doth not exclude or prohibit their Baptiſm: as appears by the ſecond Part added by way of Oppoſition, He that believeth not, ſhall be damned. For if the Text be to be ſo underſtood, that Infants are to be excluded from Baptiſm becauſe they do not believe, then muſt they likewiſe for the ſame Reaſon be excluded from Salvation, which is more than they that urge it will own. So that this Text indeed is nothing at all to the Matter.

But what then is the Deſign of it? It is a Direction or Commiſſion given by our Saviour to his Apoſtles, to extend their Preaching to all the World, which was hitherto confined within the Jewiſh Territories, and ſo to make Proſelytes among the Heathen Nations, that they alſo might be ſaved. For being in their Darkneſs and Infidelity before, they muſt firſt be taught before they could be brought to believe, and ſo before they could be fit for the Participation of the initiating Ordinance into the Church of Chriſt, which was only to be upon thoſe Terms. But this doth not in the leaſt imply a Prohibition of the Baptiſm of their Infants afterwards, when the Parents themſelves were baptized. No more than if God ſhould have ſent forth his Prophets in the time of Law, and ſhould have given them the like Commiſſion, to have proſelyted all Nations by Baptiſm and Circumciſion then, would have been a Bar to the Circumciſion of *their* Infants, when once the Parents were by Converſion to the true God brought into a Covenant-relation to him, and were circumciſed. But as the Infants of ſuch Parents, by the Rule and Practice of Circumciſion before, ought to have been circumciſed notwithſtanding ſuch Commiſſion; nor could the Prophets have underſtood the Commiſſion otherwiſe, but as conſiſtent with ſuch a Practice and Rule, unleſs an Exception of Infants had been expreſly put in; ſo the Infants of Chriſtian Believers ought to be baptized according to the general Grounds of Baptiſm, notwithſtanding this Commiſſion of our Saviour, and this Commiſſion running in theſe Terms, can by no means be juſtly interpreted to contain a Prohibition of the Baptiſm of Children, when there are ſuch Grounds for it, unleſs our Saviour had put in an expreſs Exception againſt it. Nor could the Apoſtles themſelves otherwiſe underſtand this Commiſſion than as implying and comprehending the Bap-

Baptiſm of Infants, of thoſe that were proſelyted to the Faith, according to the general Uſage and Practice of the Jewiſh Church, unleſs our Saviour had put in an expreſs Caveat againſt it: For they could not in Reaſon otherwiſe underſtand him, than according to the ordinary Cuſtoms and Uſages of that Church in which they had been bred and brought up, unleſs our Saviour had otherwiſe made known his Mind unto them.

The ſame Anſwer would ſerve for *Matth.* 28. 19. *Go, teach all Nations, baptizing them*, &c. To which I ſhall only add, that the Fundamental Miſtake of the Anabaptiſts in this Caſe, ſeems to ariſe from their imagining, that our Saviour, in theſe Words, hath delivered the whole Inſtitution of Baptiſm, and every thing that hath Relation to all the Subjects of it: Whereas this Text doth not contain the Inſtitution of Baptiſm at all, (for that was done long before, though we have not in the Scripture a particular Account *when*) but only contains a new Commiſſion of our Saviour to his Apoſtles, to go out to all Nations to make Chriſtian Proſelytes; the Partition-wall being now taken down, and no longer to confine this Favour to the Jews alone. It is a Direction of our Saviour only about this particular Matter; and as for all other things relating to Baptiſm, they were to be continued according to former Grounds and Precedents, for any thing that appears to the contrary. And this having been the immemorial Practice of the Jewiſh Church *before*, in Admiſſion of Proſelytes Children, as well as themſelves, the Apoſtle could no otherwiſe reaſonably underſtand it, but that it ought to continue ſo ſtill. Nor, conſidering the Grounds laid down for it, can we now conceive any Bar put herein to it, unleſs the Matter had been worded much otherwiſe than it is. And I ſhall further obſerve after, that this Text contains rather a good Warrant for Infant-Baptiſm, if it be underſtood as it ought to be interpreted, than any Prohibition of it. And ſo I come to the next Objection.

Object. 3. *That however Infant-Baptiſm is not commanded, nor is there any expreſs Example for it in Scripture. And therefore whatſoever the Uſe or Benefits of Infant-Baptiſm might be, if it had been commanded, there is no ſufficient Ground for it now, nor ought it to be practiſed, and can be no better than Will-worſhip if it be. And this they think makes a plain Difference between the Reaſon of circumciſing Infants formerly, and baptizing them now, becauſe that was commanded, and this is not.* This is their great and triumphant Argument, and the laſt Refuge of any Moment that they have to fly to.

Anſw. 1. But will nothing indeed ſerve beſides an expreſs Command? Will no Argument? no Reaſon? no Conſequence ſerve for the Eviction or Proof of what we are to believe and to do, without an expreſs Declaration, Command or Example? Do we not find, that our Saviour himſelf proves the

the Doctrine of the Reſurrection againſt the Sadduces, by Argument and Conſequence, only becauſe it was ſaid, that *God is the God of* Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob; and becauſe *he is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living?* And the Apoſtle proves by Conſequence the Reſurrection of Chriſt himſelf, by a rational Deduction from Scripture-Teſtimony, which he proves could be underſtood of no other but him. And in this manner 'tis uſual with the Apoſtles to deduce Concluſions from the Scriptures by reaſoning from them, in divers Diſcourſes both in the Acts and their Epiſtles. And thus our Saviour himſelf likewiſe argues the Lawfulneſs of the Diſciples plucking the Ears of Corn on the Sabbath-day, from *David*'s eating of the Shewbread, and from the Prieſts ſacrificing on the Sabbath, and from that Sentence in *Hoſea, I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice.* And ſo the Apoſtle deduceth the Maintenance of Goſpel-Miniſters, from the Reaſon and Parallel of ſome Paſſages mentioned in the Law. Yea, and do not the Anabaptiſts themſelves, as well as others, make uſe of the ſame conſequential kind of Deductions for the proving the Chriſtian Sabbath, and Womens Right to partake of the Lord's Supper, when there is no expreſs Command in Scripture, in ſo many Words, for either? And indeed the far greater part of ſuch Actions, which Men and Women perform out of Conſcience towards God, are neither injoined by any expreſs Precept, or commended by an expreſs Example in Scripture, but either by ſome general Rule only, or the Analogy of ſome proportional Example. So that by a diligent Uſe of our Reaſon, and a cloſe Ingagement of our Minds to the Search of Scripture, it behoves us to inquire diligently into it for the Conduct of our Actions, and for the Information of our Minds in the Knowledg of thoſe Truths which lie latent in Scripture, and are often delivered to us only by ſecret Inſinuations, and are to be deduc'd thence by juſt and rational Concluſion. And how would a great part of the Scripture elſe in many Reſpects be wholly uſeleſs to us? And I conclude therefore, that there is no Neceſſity for the Proof of Infant-Baptiſm, that there ſhould be a plain and expreſs Command for it in Scripture; but it is ſufficient, if it may be juſtly and reaſonably inferred by Force of Argument, by the diligent Application of our Minds to the Conſideration of thoſe Grounds upon which it may be warranted and built. And if there be ſufficient Ground for it, it ought to be received, though the Reaſons for it ſhould lie deeper than they do, and could not be diſcovered without a more narrow and accurate ſifting into the Matter.

Matth. 22. 32.

Acts 2. 29. Pſal. 16. 9, 10.

Matth. 12. 3, 4, 5.

1 Cor. 9. 8, 9, 10.

J. G's *Catabaptiſm*, p. 7.

And it is in vain to pretend, that *in doing thus we reject a Divine Command for humane Conſequences.* For what Divine Command do we reject? *that of baptizing profeſs'd Believers?* But do we reject that Command, becauſe we hold that Infants may be baptized as well as they? or is this only an uncertain and humane Conſequence? The Act of Reaſoning indeed is ours, in deducing

cing the Concluſion from ſuch Principles. But if the Premiſes, from which the Concluſion is drawn, be certain and divine, then ſo is the Concluſion which is drawn from them, if the Deduction be duly and regularly made. For the Concluſion always follows the Premiſes, and is of the ſame Nature with them, as being virtually contained in them, though the bringing of it to light is by Means of our Reaſoning.

2. Therefore I anſwer, and argue thus: That for which there is a ſufficient Warrant without an expreſs Command, may and ought to be received without an expreſs Command: but for the Baptiſm of Infants there is a ſufficient Warrant without an expreſs Command; therefore it may and ought to be received without it.

If the Anabaptiſts deny that there is or can be any ſuch ſufficient Warrant for Infant-Baptiſm without an expreſs Command, (as no doubt they will do) we muſt come to the Proof of it. If we cannot make this good, then I acknowledg we muſt produce an expreſs Command, or elſe we muſt give up the Cauſe. But if we can, then there is an End of the Objection. So that our Buſineſs is to come to the Trial, whether we can or cannot; and ſo the Objection however is at an end. And this, I think, is a ſufficient Anſwer to it: And ſo refer the Vindication to what is before argued.

3. But yet that I may anſwer a little more directly, I ſhall add this further, that in the Grounds which I have laid for Infant-Baptiſm, there is that which is *equivalent* to a Command: Becauſe it is reaſonable thence to conclude, that it is the Mind and Will of God, that we ſhould make uſe of it, (and *that* howſoever it be made known to us, is our Rule which we are to walk by.) For how can we conclude otherwiſe, when God hath been pleaſed to appoint a diſcriminating Badg and Character for his People and Children, whom he hath choſen and called into a near Covenant-relation to himſelf from the reſt of the World, and hath appointed Baptiſm for that purpoſe now, and for ſuch other Ends, as little Children for the main are capable of, as well as grown Perſons; how can we otherwiſe conclude, I ſay, but that it is the Mind and Will of God, that it ſhould be adminiſtred to them as well as others, when it is in the Nature and Ends of it accommodated to their Uſe and Benefit, as well as grown Perſons; and when a former Ordinance, which was for the ſame Ends, was expreſly commanded to be adminiſtred to them? And when we conſider that this had been the Practice before in the Jewiſh Church, to receive the Infants of Proſelytes alſo by Baptiſm, as we are informed by the moſt authentick Records of that People, and the doing of this in the Chriſtian Church is no where forbidden, how can we conclude, but that it was the Mind and Will of God, that it ſhould be continued ſtill, though he gave no expreſs Command for it? there being no need of an expreſs Command for the doing of that which uſed commonly to be done, but for

for the doing of that which had not been done before, *viz.* the proſelyting of all Nations to the Faith of Chriſt as already come, without giving any Order about their Children, becauſe there was no Alteration made about them, as the Subjects of Baptiſm, from what had been commonly obſerved before. And what is all this but a virtual Command, though it be not expreſs'd in ſo many Words? or how could the Apoſtles then, or we now, otherwiſe underſtand it? And we now much leſs, conſidering that it was the univerſal Practice of the Chriſtian Church next and immediately after the Apoſtles, which we cannot conceive how it ſhould come to paſs, unleſs it had had its Original before.

And conſidering the Premiſes, if the Anabaptiſts will prove, that it is not the Mind and Will of God that Infants now ſhould be baptized, it is not enough for them to alledg, that we have no expreſs Command for it, but they muſt either produce an expreſs Prohibition of it, (which they do not pretend to do) or elſe that which is equivalent to a Prohibition, by ſhewing the Abſurdity or Incongruity of it in the Nature of the thing, to the Uſe of Infants, as unfit or uncapable Subjects of it. And then indeed we ſhould conclude as well as they, that it is contrary to the Mind and Will of God, to have it adminiſtred to them. As we hold the baptizing of Bells, or other inanimate things amongſt the Papiſts, or ſhould hold the Baptiſm of Dogs or any other brute Creatures to be ſo, becauſe though the Baptiſm of ſuch Creatures be not expreſly forbidden, yet it is altogether incongruous in reſpect of the Nature and Ends of Baptiſm, to have it adminiſtred to ſuch. And therefore the baptizing of them is an Abuſe of Baptiſm, and a groſs Superſtition. But when Baptiſm is ſo ordered and conſtituted by God in the Nature and Ends of it, as that Infants are capable Subjects of it; and when there are ſuch other juſt Grounds laid for the Application of it to them, and no Prohibition or Caveat put in, to warn us about it, we cannot but hold rather that it is the Mind and Will of God, that it ſhould be applied and adminiſtred to them. And this I take to be equivalent to an expreſs Command.

I ſhall only add this further, that it may be ſaid, That there is a *general* Command, which may likewiſe extend to Infants, even in the general Commiſſion; *Matth.* 28. μαθητεύσατε· *Go, diſciple all Nations, baptizing them.* For Infants are a Part of the Nations: And if Infants may be made Diſciples, (as that Word here tranſlated *teach*, ſhould be rendred) then as Diſciples too, they ſhould be baptized, for all that are Diſciples ſhould be ſo. Now that Infants may be Diſciples is plain, becauſe they are ſo called, *Acts* 15. 10. *Why lay ye a Yoke upon the Necks of the Diſciples?* which muſt be underſtood of Infants as well as others; it being the Yoke of Circumciſion that the Apoſtle there ſpeaks of, which uſed moſt commonly to be adminiſtred to Infants, or to them together with others; and was called *a Yoke*, becauſe of the

the Burdenſomneſs, and Painfulneſs, and Bloodineſs of it. So that it is reaſonable to conclude, that Infants here are ſome of the Diſciples meant. And it is no way unreaſonable to call them by that Name, though they are in no preſent immediate Capacity of learning, or being taught; for it is ſufficient that they be entred into Chriſt's School for that purpoſe, and engaged to learn of him, as of their Maſter. And this they may be, and ſo may be viſible admitted Diſciples by Baptiſm, in order to future teaching, though they are not capable of preſent. As for Aliens and Infideis of grown Age, to whom the Apoſtles were ſent, they muſt be firſt taught before they become Diſciples, becauſe they can be brought to be Diſciples only by their own Conſent; whereas Children may be entred into Chriſt's School without any preſent actual Conſent of their own, by the Act of others that are their Parents or Guardians, and ſo may become Diſciples firſt, and ſo be baptized as ſuch, and then be taught afterwards.

Now, as for the other part of the Objection, *viz. the want of an expreſs Example of Infant-Baptiſm*, that is of leſs Moment: For an Example is of much leſs Moment than a Command; and if a Command be not neceſſary, then much leſs is an Example neceſſary. But if Infant-Baptiſm may be concluded upon the Grounds aforeſaid, without an expreſs Command, then much more without an expreſs Example; ſo that the Anſwer to the former Part of the Objection will alſo be eaſily applicable here.

And indeed it is not at all ſtrange, that ſuch a Practice, though then in being, ſhould be ſilently paſs'd over in Scripture: Becauſe the Scripture is not intended for a perfect Regiſter of all Facts that were done, though it be a perfect Rule of Faith and Practice in all things neceſſary to Salvation. So that the thing might be done then, though the Scripture doth not mention it. And it might be paſs'd over for this very Reaſon, becauſe it was no new thing, but was common before among the Jews, and ſo there need to be leſs notice taken of it; or becauſe the Apoſtles and Miniſters Buſineſs then was principally to preach to, and convert, and ſo baptize grown Perſons and Fathers; and then the Baptiſm of Children followed of Courſe by the general and common Rule and Practice, and therefore there was leſs notice taken particularly of them.

But yet though there be no particular Example of it, it may reaſonably be inferred, that it *was* practiſed, becauſe there were ſuch reaſonable Grounds to build the Practice upon, and conſidering the Practice that had been among the Jews before, of the baptizing Proſelytes Infants; and conſidering that there was no Complaint amongſt any for the Neglect of their Infants, notwithſtanding the Ceſſation of Circumciſion, as it is probable there would have been, if there had no other Ordinance ſucceeded in the room of it, which might be applicable to Infants, becauſe then they might well think, that their

Infants by *their* becoming Christians were in a worse and more neglected Condition than before; for whereas before by Circumcision they were differenced from the Common and Unclean that were the Uncircumcised, now they must be reckoned among the Uncircumcised too, being not circumcised, and so also common and unclean, if no other Ordinance should succeed in the room of Circumcision. So that these Considerations give just Ground to infer, that it was then practised, though it be not particularly mentioned. *Add* to which, that they are likely to be included in those Households mentioned to be baptized; for the Household contains all that is in the Household, and 'tis strange if in all those Households there should be no little ones. And though those that heard and believed were baptized upon their *own* Faith, yet it is reasonable likewise to infer, that the Infants were baptized, though without a Faith of their own, as the Infants of Proselytes before, by virtue of God's Covenant, which, upon the Faith of their Parents, they come presently to share in. And then moreover the Antients delivered this as a Tradition and Practice derived from the Apostles, as we have seen; and there being no other probable Ground to be assigned for the Original of it so soon in the Christian Church, and for the universal Practice of it, that did every where obtain, it is fairly agreeable, that it was the Apostolical Practice before.

And there is as little to be said from Scripture-Example for the baptizing of Persons at Age, whose Parents were Christians when they were born, and who had been educated from their Childhood in the Christian Religion. For there is not the least hint in Scripture of any such that were baptized by the Apostles, but only of those that were converted from Judaism or Paganism unto Christianity, and *that* presently after their Conversion. And yet the Anabaptists do not doubt, but that such were baptized, though there be no express Example of it. But if this Argument be good against Infant-Baptism, because there is no Example of it, it will be as good against the baptizing of such, because there is as little Example of their being baptized. And so the Argument would prove too much, and more than they intend; and so they must turn Quakers too, and deny all Baptism now, for the same Reason that they deny Infant-Baptism. But if to salve this, they will argue, that the Warrantableness of baptizing such grown Persons may sufficiently be deduced to Scripture-Consequence, from the Reason and End of the Institution of Baptism, without any such Example, we will allow the Argument. But then we must desire that Justice of them, that the Practice of Infant-Baptism be likewise allowed to be warrantable for the same Reason, if we can likewise deduce it by just Consequence from sufficient Grounds, though we produce no Example of it.

To

To conclude, there is no need of an expreſs Example, when we have ſufficient Warrant beſides without it. We muſt not teach God how he muſt notify his Mind to us; but if he hath made known his Mind and Will to us in any way, we are to practiſe accordingly, whether there be Example or no Example left of ſuch a Practice: The Mind and Will of God however made known to us, being to be our Rule, and not only when it is done this way or that way.

Object. 4. *That this is the Reaſon why the Church is ſo full of Hypocrites and carnal Profeſſors, and profane Perſons. For being all almoſt are baptized in their Infancy, and thereby admitted Church-Members, they are therefore ſo ſtill eſteemed; and ſo the Churches of the Pedobaptiſts are overloaded with ſuch Perſons which defile their Communions.*

Anſw. But what! are there no ſuch Perſons to be found among thoſe of the other Perſwaſion? I heartily wiſh indeed, for the Honour of our holy Maſter, and the Credit of his Religion, that there were no ſuch either among them or us, or thoſe of any other Denomination. But this is not to be expected in this imperfect State of the Chriſtian Church, which is as a *Net caſt into the Sea, that receives of every kind*, where good and bad are mix'd together; and ſo we muſt expect it will be till the End of the World, *when the Angels ſhall come forth, and ſever the Wicked from among the Juſt*. But let us not blame *that* for this, which is not to be blamed. It is not to be laid to the Charge of Baptiſm either in Infancy or in Age, nor to *that* in Infancy more than to *that* at Age. For if once the Baptiſm of adult Perſons were the general Faſhion, and as commonly received, and as much encouraged, as Infant-Baptiſm now is, I doubt not but the Church would be as full of Hypocrites then, and carnal Goſpellers, for any thing that Baptiſm at Age would do more to prevent it than Infant-Baptiſm now doth: For it is no great Matter to make ſuch a Confeſſion of Faith as may ſerve turn for Baptiſm; and if once it were Mens Intereſt to do ſo, it would be eaſily enough gone through. Matth. 13. 47.

As for ſo many *profane Perſons, which they ſay are in the Church by reaſon of Infant-Baptiſm, becauſe ſo many are look'd upon of the Church that were once baptized, and theſe are for the moſt part bad. I anſwer*, However that be, yet Infant-Baptiſm is not to be blamed for it, but generally it is the want of Care in Parents and Godfathers about the Inſtruction and Education of Children that have been baptized; and want of Diſcipline in the Church, to expel thoſe that are profane out of it, when they once become ſcandalous in it. It is not Infant-Baptiſm that is to be blamed, for that is a proper Means rather to make Perſons good, and that betimes: That will do its Part well if it be rightly adverted to, when they grow up to Underſtanding, by Reflection upon it; and full as well as if Baptiſm were adminiſtred at Age. This

tends to continue and help forward the Conveyance of Religion down to after-Generations, by laying a ſtrict Engagement upon Children to be good betimes, and upon Parents to educate them and bring them up well in order to it; ſo that there might be ſtill a young Nurſery of tender Plants growing up in the Vineyard of the Lord. And to ſay otherwiſe, is a Reflection upon the Wiſdom of the Jewiſh Church, in admitting the Children of Proſelytes, together with their Parents, yea and of the Wiſdom of the holy God himſelf, (who loves the Purity and Glory of the Church certainly more than any of us can do, and knoweth beſt what moſt tends to further it) who himſelf ordered the Token of his Covenant to be applied to Children at eight Days old. For according to this Opinion, it had been much better to have let it alone till all had come to Age. And the ſame Cenſure will lie upon the Jewiſh Church for admitting of Members then in their Infant-ſtate, as much as it can now upon the Churches of the Pedobaptiſts. But let not us go to teach God, or inſtruct him what Means are beſt to promote the Churches Purity. I can make no doubt but Infant-Baptiſm is as great an Advantage to the Church now, as Infant-Circumciſion was then in all the ſpiritual Reſpects of it, or as the Baptiſm then of Proſelytes Infants was.

But if there be other Ordinances and Duties neglected, which God hath appointed, which ſhould be for the procuring of a pure Church, or for the cleanſing of it when it is impure, it is the Neglect of thoſe Ordinances and Duties, that is the true Reaſon of that Impurity in the Church, and not the keeping up of *that* Ordinance, which rather helps towards its Purification, as well as admits into the Communion of it. They of the other way, when profane Perſons are at any time found among them, don't blame their Baptiſm at Age for it, as if that were the Reaſon of their Badneſs, which would rather tend to make them good: and if theſe Perſons continue ſtill in their Church, no doubt it is the Churches Neglect, and not the Fault of their Baptiſm. And ſo if profane Perſons be found in the Church, wherein the Members are admitted by Infant-Baptiſm, let not Infant-Baptiſm be blamed for *that*, but the Neglect of thoſe other Ordinances and Duties that ſhould tend to promote the Churches Purity.

Object. 5. *Why may not the Lord's Supper be adminiſtred to Infants as well as Baptiſm, that being as well a Seal of the Covenant as Baptiſm is, and was likewiſe adminiſtred to them in ſome of the firſt Ages of the Church?*

Anſw. If the Lord's Supper ſhould be adminiſtred to Infants, it could be of no other Uſe to them than Baptiſm is, *viz.* to be a viſible Badg or Mark of their being owned and received by us as the Children of God, and Members of the Church of Chriſt, and a Seal of the Bleſſings of the Covenant, and of their Communion therein. Theſe things are ſufficiently confirmed to them

them by the Ordinance of Baptism; and the Ordinance of the Lord's-Supper could be of no further use to them than what this comes to. And therefore the Administration of the Lord's-Supper to them would be supervacaneous and needless, because it can do no more for them than Baptism doth.

Nor is the Ordinance of the Lord's-Supper so fit and proper to be administred to them for the Ends aforesaid, as Baptism is: Because Baptism is a Sacrament or Ordinance particularly designed or appointed for this purpose, to be for their visible *Initiation* or *Insition* into the Church of Christ, and is therefore to be administred to all the Members of it, as a Token or Sign of their being the Children of God, and Members of Christ; and so to seal to them the Blessings of the Covenant, and to engage them on their part to the performance of the Conditions. And Infants being capable of all these Ends and Uses of it, which are the chief Ends of Baptism, it is therefore proper and fit to be administred to them. Whereas the Lord's-Supper is a *Sacrament of Growth or Perfection*, for the strengthening and refreshing of our Souls, and for our Growth and Progress in Grace; which is promoted and furthered by an Act of Reflection on our parts upon the Death of Christ, and the Benefits that he hath purchased thereby; and is to be a thankful Memorial, or for solemn Thanksgiving to Christ for this great Grace and Love of his, that he hath manifested to us in his dying for us, and thereby purchasing and obtaining so great Benefits for us: This being the chief End of that Institution, as appears by our Saviour's own words, *Do this in Remembrance of me.* Now all this requires great Knowledg and Consideration, and pious Reflections upon what we are about, which Infants are uncapable of.

Nor is there the like Scripture-ground for the Administration of the Lord's-Supper to Infants, as we have seen there is for Baptism: Nor is there the same Parallel of it, or Pattern for it from the Practice of the Jewish Church, as there is for Infant-Baptism, in their Administration of Circumcision to Infants for a Token of the Covenant betwixt God and them; and likewise in their baptizing the Infants of Proselytes. Whereas the Children of the Jews were not admitted to the Passover, which is that other Jewish Ordinance, which may seem to answer most to the Christian *Eucharist*, till they were old enough to enquire about the meaning of the Service, and were capable of understanding the Nature of it, as it was done in Remembrance of their Deliverance out of *Egypt*; *Exod.* 12. 26, 27. And so, agreeably to this therefore, neither should the Children of Christians communicate at the Lord's-Supper, till they are capable likewise of understanding the Nature and Ends of it; as it is a *Sacrificial Feast* in Remembrance of Christ's Death and Passion, and of our Deliverance from Sin and Death, which we have thereby. And this indeed may well require more Years over their Heads, before Children will be capable to come to the Understanding thereof, than what might capacitate

capacitate the Jewiſh Children for the underſtanding the nature of the Paſſover, becauſe that Myſtery is greater; but this is meerly accidental. But as ſoon as our Children are capable of underſtanding the Deſign of this holy Communion, and of performing thoſe Acts that are required with reſpect unto it, we hold it their Duty likewiſe to participate in it.

Caſe of Infant-Baptiſm, the Concluſion.

And then as for the Practice of Infant-Communion in the Chriſtian Church, we have not near the like Evidence of the Practice of it from Antiquity, either as to the Antientneſs, or the Generality of the Practice of it, as we have for that of Infant-Baptiſm. There being none of the moſt antient Writers, *Ireneus*, *Origen*, *Tertullian*, that ſpeak any thing of it, as they do of Infant-Baptiſm, and *Origen* particularly, as a Cuſtom or Tradition derived from the Apoſtles; nor near ſo many in the following Ages mentioning it, as there do Infant-Baptiſm. And many of thoſe that owned the Neceſſity of Infant-Baptiſm, as the *Pelagians*, yet never owned the Neceſſity of Infant-Communion. And as for the Practice of Infant-Communion therefore, the Weſtern Churches have long ago relinquiſh'd it, as apprehending it to be a Miſtake, grounded neither upon any Text of Scripture, nor Apoſtolical Tradition, and being in the Nature and Deſign of it improper for Infants; but yet have ſtill retained Infant-Baptiſm, as being in all reſpects well grounded, and moſt aptly to be accomodated to them.

It was an eaſy and charitable Slip which the Ancient Church was ſuffered to fall into amongſt other things, to give the Lord's-Supper to Infants, (as they uſed to do to grown Perſons preſently after their Baptiſm) that they might partake of all the viſible Seals of Divine Grace and Favour. Rather than deprive them of any, they would give them all. This, tho a Miſtake, yet was a Matter of no dangerous Conſequence in Religion; as the Anabaptiſts pretend that of Infant-Baptiſm to be in the higheſt degree, as introducing a meer Mock-Chriſtianity, and a Mock-Church and Miniſtry into the World. Now it is not imaginable, that God ſhould ſuffer ſuch a Church-deſtroying Corruption ſo early to prevail in *that* Church that was ſo famous for Miracles, Martyrdom, and true unaffected Holineſs as the Antient Church was. But for ſuch a harmleſs and innocent Miſtake as that of Infant-Communion, it is no ſtrange thing that their Charity ſhould a little be let alone to over-biaſs their Judgment. And I ſhould much rather chooſe to join with *them* in their Charity, than with theſe *Duri Patres Infantum*, that are ſo unkind to deny *that* to Infants, which God hath been pleaſed in his great Grace and Kindneſs ſo freely to vouchſafe unto them, and to inſtate them in.

The

The CONCLUSION.

THus have I endeavoured, with all convenient Brevity, and I hope with Perſpicuity, to manage the Argument I have taken in hand: And I do not know, that I have balk'd any conſiderable Argument or Objection, that ſeem'd to me to be of any force againſt it. And I have deſired to follow the Apoſtle's Direction, *to ſpeak the Truth in Love*, without any bitter Reflection upon the contrary-minded; whom, notwithſtanding their Diſſent, I ſhall reſpect as Brethren. But as for the way that they have taken up, conſidering what I have ſaid in Defence of our own, I can no otherwiſe eſteem of it than as a very culpable Schiſm. If the Denial of Infant-Baptiſm had been a ſimple Error, I ſhould have leſs concerned my ſelf about it. But when there is ſuch a Train of diſmal Conſequences following at the heels of it, as the unchurching all Churches that are not of the like Communion, and the denial of all other Miniſtry and Ordinances beſides their own, which muſt needs naturally be accompanied with many fierce Animoſities and unbrotherly Contentions, to the deſtroying of Chriſtian Love and Peace; it ſeems to me to look with a frightful Aſpect. Therefore they muſt excuſe me, if out of a Love to Truth and Peace, I have endeavoured to rectify the Miſtaken Judgment of thoſe that have gone aſtray, and to ſettle thoſe that have need of Eſtabliſhment in the way of Catholick Verity, Love and Union.

But that the Doctrine which I have defended, may be more effectually vindicated from that Contempt and Scorn that is poured upon it by thoſe of the contrary Perſwaſion, it is our part to make that good and holy Improvement of the Baptiſm that we have received, as is ſutable to the Nature of it. And *you that are Parents, and Godfathers and Godmothers*, pray conſider your Charge and Truſt that is committed to you, and remember, as it is excellently expreſt in the Exhortation after Publick Baptiſm, *That it is your Parts and Duties to ſee that the Children be taught, ſo ſoon as they ſhall be able to learn, what a ſolemn Vow, Promiſe and Profeſſion they have made by you: And that they may know theſe things the better, to call upon them to hear Sermons, and provide that they may learn the Creed, the Lord's-Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and all other things which a Chriſtian ought to know and believe to his Soul's Health; and that they may be vertuouſly brought up to lead a Godly and a Chriſtian Life.* It is the Careleſneſs of Parents and Godfathers about the Education of Children, and their Neglect to inforce upon them their Baptiſmal Obligations, that hath been one great Cauſe of Offence, that thoſe of

of the contrary Perſwaſion have taken againſt Infant-Baptiſm. For what wonder is it, if *that* be counted a *Nullity*, that there is ſo little good uſe made of? And to what purpoſe is the ſprinkling or waſhing Children with Water, if there be no care taken to inſtil into them, and to bring them up to that Chriſtian Purity in Heart and Life, that is ſignified thereby? They are bound indeed afterwards however, when they come to Underſtanding, to reflect upon the Obligations that in their Infancy they were brought under: But there can be little Expectation ordinarily, as we ſee by ſad Experience, that ever they *will* do it, if their Education and Inſtruction be neglected in their younger Years. Indeed it is to be doubted, that the Baptiſm of Infants with many is turned into a meer Formality: And the Charge that is ſo ſolemnly and particularly undertaken by Godfathers and Godmothers, is never thought of afterwards to any purpoſe. But many Parents think that they do their Duty ſufficiently, if they bring up their Children to ſome Art or Trade, or provide Portions and Eſtates for them, whereby they may be able to live in the World: And Godfathers and Godmothers, if they do but give them ſomething, as a Token of their Reſpect in ſome ſmall Gift. But that they may be brought to lead a truly Chriſtian Life, that they may deny Ungodlineſs and Worldly Luſts, and live Godly, Righteouſly and Soberly in this preſent evil World, which is the great End of Baptiſm, Ordinances, Goſpel, and Life it ſelf: How little is that reflected upon by many, as if it were none at all of their Concern and Duty? A right practical Improvement of our Infant-Baptiſm by our ſelves, and a Religious Care taken in the Education of our Children ſutably to the Obligations thereof, will be a better Vindication of the Uſefulneſs of Infant-Baptiſm, than all the Arguments that can otherwiſe be brought for it, (tho never ſo good) which will ſeem all but Noiſe and Sound to many, unleſs the Practical Influence and Power of it be made more to appear in real Benefit and Fruit.

Now the God of Peace, which brought again from the Dead our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlaſting Covenant, make us perfect in every good Work to do his Will, working in us that which is well pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt; to whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

A N

AN

APPENDIX;

Wherein is ſhewed,

That it is not *neceſſary to baptize by Dipping.*

HAving diſpatch'd the Controverſy of Infant-Baptiſm, I ſhall here add a few Words of the Manner of Adminiſtration of Baptiſm; and ſhew, That it is not neceſſary, that Baptiſm ſhould be adminiſtred by Dipping, or Plunging, or Dowzing into the Water.

If it be neceſſary that Baptiſm ſhould be always adminiſtred by Dipping, this Neceſſity muſt ariſe from the Will and Intention of our Saviour ſome way declared to us in the Inſtitution of Baptiſm, or in the Adminiſtration of it left to us in Scripture. And there muſt be ſome Notices or Evidences, by which this Intention or Will of our Saviour may be made manifeſt to us; from which we may neceſſarily infer, or conclude, that this particular Form of Adminiſtration is determinately preſcribed by him. And this, I think, can be collected no otherwiſe, but by one or other, or all of theſe three ways, *viz.* Either from the Uſe and Signification of the Words, by which this Ordinance is expreſs'd; or from the Examples of the Adminiſtration of it, that are left us in Scripture; or from the Nature and Ends of the Ordinance it ſelf. And if it cannot be neceſſarily inferred from all, or either of theſe Conſiderations, that it was our Saviour's Will and Intention, that Baptiſm ſhould always be adminiſtred by Dipping; then, I ſuppoſe, it will be allowed, that Dipping is not eſſential to Baptiſm. Now I ſhall endeavour to prove, that it cannot be neceſſarily inferred any of theſe ways.

I. Not from the Uſe or Signification of the word *Baptize*, which is not uſed to ſignify Dipping, but waſhing or cleanſing by Water, which way ſoever it be. For,

1*ſt*. It is to be obſerved, That whenever the Holy Ghoſt in the New Teſtament hath occaſion to mention the Act of Dipping, it is never expreſſed

Not βαπτίζω, but βάπτω.

by this word that signifieth to Baptize, but by another, which we have but four times in the New Testament, *viz. Luk.* 16. 24. *Joh.* 13. 26. *Mat.* 26. 23. *Rev.* 19. 13. But whenever the Act of Baptizing is expreſt, it is always expreſt by another word, and not by that which is commonly uſed to expreſs the Act of Dipping. From whence we may probably inſer a difference in the Signification, not a Sameneſs: For if they were both of the ſame Importance or Signification, it is moſt likely that they would be uſed promiſcuouſly.

J. G's Catabaptiſm, P. 47.

2*dly.* I ſay the word *Baptize*, or Baptiſm, is often uſed to ſignify any kind of waſhing or cleanſing by Water, by the Application of Water any way to the Thing, and not only by dipping of it into Water; which in ſome caſes was not cuſtomary, nor likely. As when it is ſaid, *Mark* 7. 4. *The Phariſees eat not, except they waſh:* In the Greek it is, *Except they be baptized.* And *Luke* 11.38. the Phariſees marvelled, that *our Saviour had not firſt waſhed before Dinner:* In the Greek likewiſe it is, *that he was not firſt baptized.* Now the manner of waſhing in that caſe ſeems uſually to have been by Aſperſion of Water on the Hands: And therefore this is to expreſs the Office of a Servant to his Maſter; 2 *Kings* 3. 11. Eliſha *poured Water on the Hands of* Elijah. And the ſame word is uſed to expreſs their frequent Ceremonial Waſhing of *Beds or Tables*; as likewiſe it is in that Text, *Mark* 7. 4. In the Original it is, *the Baptiſm of* theſe things. And it is no way likely, that this ſhould be ordinarily done by Immerſion, or putting them all into, or under Water, but rather by pouring Water upon them, and thereby to cleanſe them. And *Heb.* 9. 10. we read of *divers Waſhings* that they had: In the Greek *divers Baptiſms*, many of which were Sprinklings. Therefore there can be no Argument for Dipping, *&c.* ſolidly grounded upon the bare Signification of the word *Baptize*, becauſe *that* is uſed to ſignify any kind of Waſhing without Dipping as well as by it.

Ἐὰν μὴ βαπτίσωνται. Ἐβαπτίσθη.

Διαφόροις βαπτισμοῖς.

3*dly.* It is ſometimes to be obſerved, that the Act of Baptizing is ſo expreſt, that it would be very uncouth and improper to underſtand it of *Dipping:* As when it is expreſt by baptizing *with* Water, not by baptizing *into* Water, or *under* Water: as *Luke* 3. 16. *I indeed baptize you with Water.* And ſo *Acts* 11. 16. it would be very uncouth and improper to ſay, that a Man is dipp'd *with* Water.

4*thly.* Again; this ſame word that is uſed to expreſs Water-Baptiſm, or baptizing *with* Water, is in like manner uſed to expreſs Chriſt's baptizing *with* the Holy Ghoſt and with Fire; as in that ſame Text, *Luke* 3. 16. Now that cannot be ſo underſtood, that Chriſt ſhould *dip* or *dowze* Men into the Holy Ghoſt; but the uſual way of Expreſſion is, that the Holy Ghoſt with his Gifts and Graces was *poured upon* them: thus *Act.* 2. 17, 18. *I will pour out in thoſe days of my Spirit upon them.* And *Acts* 10. 45. *On the Gentiles alſo was poured*

poured out the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt. And *Tit.* 3. 6. *The renewing of the Holy Ghoſt, which is ſhed,* or poured *on us abundantly.* And why ſhould we not underſtand the baptizing *with* Water, in Proportion and Similitude to this? So that I can ſee no reaſon to conclude, that it was our Saviour's Will and Intention, that Baptiſm ſhould always be by Dipping, from the Uſe or Signification of the Word.

II. It cannot be neceſſarily inferr'd or concluded from the Examples of Perſons being baptized, that are mentioned in Scripture. For in thoſe Examples that ſeem to be moſt expreſs for Dipping, the moſt that can be concluded, is only a bare Probability of it. And in ſome it is highly improbable, and the Probability is rather on the other ſide. And if it could be demonſtratively and ſatisfactorily made out by Scripture-Examples, that the uſual way of Adminiſtration of Baptiſm then was by Dipping, yet that would lay no neceſſary Obligation upon us to the like.

1. I ſay, that in thoſe Examples, which ſeem to be moſt expreſs for Dipping, and therefore are moſt commonly urged for the Proof of it, there is at moſt but a bare Probability of it, and hardly *that* in ſome; but there is no demonſtrative Proof can be made from any of them, either from the expreſs Words or Story of thoſe Examples, or by juſt Conſequence from them. There are three Texts of Scripture that are uſually urged to this purpoſe. I ſhall conſider them ſeverally.

The firſt is *Mat.* 3. 13, 16. which ſets forth the Baptiſm of our Saviour by *John Baptiſt* at *Jordan:* For *ver.* 16. *Jeſus, when he was baptized, went up ſtraightway out of the Water.* But what then? Can it be neceſſarily inferr'd from hence, that he was dipp'd in it, or under it? If he went into it, (as the manner uſually was in that Country, to waſh their Feet, that were dirty or foul with travelling) and ſo *there* was baptized; yet was there no way to have this done, but by Dipping? But indeed this Text, if rightly interpreted, doth not ſo much as prove, that our Saviour went into the Water at all. For in the Greek it is only, ἀνέβη ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕδατος, he came up *from* the Water, not *out* of it. And ſo he might be very well ſaid to do, if he only went to the ſide or brink: There being ſome little Aſcent at leaſt from the Water to the dry Ground. But however, there is no determinate manner of our Saviour's Baptiſm in it expreſt, nor can be neceſſarily or demonſtratively inferr'd. And therefore at moſt that particular Form, which the Anabaptiſts inſiſt upon, is but a meer Probability.

Another Text that is urged, is *Joh.* 3. 23. *That* John *was baptizing in* Enon *near to* Salim, *becauſe there was much Water there.* And becauſe of the numbers of thoſe that went to *John* to be baptized, it was moſt convenient that it ſhould be in ſuch Places where there was Plenty of Water. But can any

one prove hence, that they were baptized by dipping into it, or under it? Is this any thing more than a Conjecture? tho he baptized there, where there was much Water, yet the manner of baptizing there is not ſtated or determined. So that this which is ſo much inſiſted upon, at moſt from hence, is but a Conjectural Probability; and therefore can be no matter of Faith, nor can lay any Obligation upon Practice. For beſides, in that place it is not ſaid, that there was much Water together; but πολλὰ ὕδατα, *many Waters*, that is, many Streams or Rivolets, which were not very common generally in that Country. And thus there might be, tho there were not Water of a ſufficient Depth to dip a Man in it. But let that be how it will, there is no determinate Manner expreſt, or to be certainly and evidently concluded, as ought to have been to build a Conſequence of ſuch a Nature upon, as to infer an Obligation to ſuch a determinate Manner.

Laſtly, that of *Acts* 8. 36. uſeth to be inſiſted upon, concerning the Baptiſm of the Eunuch by *Philip*. For *ver.* 38. it is ſaid, *They went down both into the Water, both* Philip *and the Eunuch, and he baptized him: and when they were come up out of the Water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away* Philip. Yet neither here is the particular Manner of the Adminiſtration expreſt, nor yet to be certainly collected. It is no ſtrange thing, that they did go down into the Water in that warm Country; *that* they might do, and yet *Philip* not dip the Eunuch in it, but take up Water with his Hand to pour it upon him. And yet the words in the Original may be as conveniently interpreted, that they both went down *to* the Water, (as the Eunuch was journying upon the Road by) and came up *from* it only: For ſo the Particles here rendred *into* and *out of*, are often expounded. And if ſo, then this Text doth not ſo much as prove, that they went *into* the Water, but only to the Bank or Side of it. And beſides, *that* Water, if they did go into it, is reported by thoſe that have travelled into, and viewed thoſe Parts, to have been only a Riſe or Fountain, ſo ſmall or ſhallow, as that a Man could not be dipp'd in it. St. *Jerom* ſaith, it was *Fons ad Radicem montis ebulliens*, a Fountain bubbling out at the bottom of the Hill; *Et ab eâdem in quâ gignitur, ſorbetur humo*, and forthwith drank up by the Earth that produced it, as it is expreſſed by *Sandys* in his Travels, ſpeaking of the ſame Place; and therefore it is not likely to be of any conſiderable Depth. And ſo the Expreſſion in the Story of the *Acts* ſeems to intimate, *ver.* 36. they came ἐπὶ τι ὕδωρ, unto a certain Water, or *ſomewhat of Water*, enough to baptize the Eunuch, tho not by dipping. But from none of theſe Relations of Baptiſm can the particular or determinate manner of the Adminiſtration certainly be gathered; and therefore much leſs the Neceſſity of any Form be concluded. So that at moſt, all that theſe Places amount to, is a meer Probability of the thing, that it was done in that manner, and no more. And yet theſe are all the Places from Example, that uſe

Εἰς & ἐκ. *See* Matth. 15. 24. Luk. 1. 71.

De Locis Hebraicis, *tom.* 3.

J. G's *Catabaptiſm*, P. 51.

uſe to be produc'd to prove the Neceſſity. But how ſhort doth all come of a demonſtrative Proof?

2. In ſome of the Examples or Inſtances of Perſons baptized in Scripture, it is very improbable that the way of the Adminiſtration of Baptiſm was by Dipping; and the Probability is rather on the other ſide, that it was not by Dipping, but rather ſome other way.

As when we read of ſuch vaſt Multitudes baptized by *John*, which the Evangeliſt giveth us an Account of; *Matth.* 3. 5, 6. *Then went out to him* Jeruſalem, *and all* Judea, *and all the Region round about* Jordan, *and were baptized of him.* This great Conflux of People to him, ſeems to be chiefly at the Beginning of his Miniſtry, though that continued but a little time neither at moſt. And we have no Account that *John* had any Aſſiſtance in baptizing any; for we do not read that his Diſciples baptized, though the Diſciples of our Lord did. So that the whole Work muſt lie upon him, in baptizing ſo many thouſand People, as it is likely there were, that came to him day by day. And what a tedious and dangerous Drudgery muſt this be for him, if he muſt ſtand ſo many Hours, or whole Days together in deep Water, and muſt take all this Company one by one, to bury them under Water, and take them up again after the Mode? How unlikely or improbable therefore is this?

And ſo when we read of *three thouſand Perſons* that were baptized, and added to the Church the ſame Day, *Acts* 2. 41. For it ſeems that they were baptized the ſame Day that they heard the Word, and were converted to the Faith of Chriſt. And this Work, it cannot well be ſuppoſed, that they could go about before Noon at ſooneſt: For St. *Peter* began his Sermon but about nine of the Clock in the Morning, or *the third Hour of the Day*, ver. 15. And after that there muſt needs ſome time paſs in Diſcourſe, *&c.* before they could be ready for the Work of Baptiſm. And how unlikely is this, that all this could be done, and ſo many Perſons dipp'd after the Mode, by ſo few as there were to do it, in an Afternoon? And that in the City *Jeruſalem*, wherein there was no Water of Depth, there being only the little Brook *Cedron* running by? And as for Ciſterns, or other Receptacles of Water, where ſhould they find them to dip ſuch a Multitude in, and that upon a ſudden? The moſt of that Nature, we may ſuppoſe, were about the Temple, for the waſhing and bathing of the Prieſts; but it is not likely there could be ſo many as to ſerve for ſuch a Multitude; nor that they ſhould have leave to uſe thoſe that were. And the Water-pots that were in private Houſes were commonly leſs, as ſerving chiefly for the waſhing of their Feet when they came in from Travel. And there is not the leaſt Intimation of their going out of the City to perform this Work. And if they had, that would have taken up

more

more time than what could have been ſpared in an Afternoon. And yet as Geographers report, there was not any Water near the City of that Quantity, that could be ſufficient for this Performance neither. And beſides, was all this done, and were they baptized naked, or in their Clothes? If naked, where was the Modeſty that became ſuch an Ordinance, in the dipping of ſuch a vaſt mix'd Multitude, as it is likely, of Men and Women together, at Noon-day? If in ſome Clothes, muſt they all go home firſt and fetch Clothes to change, or muſt they walk to their ſeveral Habitations, it may be a conſiderable ſpace, in their wet Clothes? Which way ſoever Mens Imaginations may work to form a Suppoſition, how ſtrangely improbable is all?

So when we read of baptizing a whole Houſhold, in the deep of the Night, in a private Houſe, in a City, without the leaſt Intimation or Likelihood of their going forth to a River, or any Water out of the Houſe for it: As we read in the Story of the Jailor, *Acts* 16. 33. *For he took them the ſame Hour of the Night, and waſhed their Stripes*, (that is, of *Paul* and *Silas*) *and was baptized, he and all his ſtraightway, viz.* in the very Priſon; and then brought them into his own Houſe, which was probably joined to the Priſon, and ſet Meat before them. This is not very likely, in theſe Circumſtances, to be done by Dipping neither.

And what an unlikely thing is it, that St. *Paul*, when he was in that weak Condition through Faſting, and that great Conſternation of Spirit that he was in by reaſon of his Viſion, ſhould be baptized by Dipping in cold Water, in his private Lodging, as the Series of the Story ſeems to intimate to us, that he then was; *Acts* 9. 9. *He for three Days was without Sight, and neither did eat nor drink.* But *ver.* 18. when *Ananias* came and ſpake to him, *he received Sight forthwith, and aroſe*, (being, it is likely, before upon the Bed, through Weakneſs and Trouble) *and was baptized: And when he had received Meat*, which it ſeems was not till after his Baptiſm, *he was ſtrengthned.*

Conſidering theſe things therefore, if we conſider the bare Relations of the Scripture, it ſeems highly improbable, that in theſe Inſtances Baptiſm was adminiſtred by Dipping; but it ſeems more probable that it was done ſome other way, by Aſperſion or Application of Water, not by Dipping. So that if in the former Inſtances there was a Probability that Baptiſm was by Immerſion or plunging in the Water, (though in ſome of them we have ſeen it hardly amounts to that neither) yet in theſe now mentioned there is a Probability at leaſt on the other ſide. So that here is Probability againſt Probability. And I will appeal to any Man that is not prejudic'd, whether thoſe Accounts of Baptiſm, that we have in the former Relations, can ever be rationally ſuppoſed to contain a demonſtrative Evidence and Proof of the Neceſſity of Dipping,

as

as being eſſential to Baptiſm, when there are ſuch Probabilities in others of a quite different Adminiſtration?

3. But I ſhall add this further, that if it could be demonſtratively proved by Scripture-Examples, that the way of Adminiſtration of Baptiſm in thoſe times, was by Immerſion or Dipping under Water, yet could it lay no neceſſary Obligation upon us to the like, unleſs it could be proved, that this determinate manner was appointed by Chriſt's Inſtitution, which it is impoſſible to prove by theſe Examples alone, if the thing be capable of being performed otherwiſe. For our Saviour might give out the Command of baptizing with Water in general, without determining the manner of Adminiſtration, but leaving the particular Form or Mode indifferent, and to be uſed *ad libitum*, this way, or that way. And they might take up this Mode of Immerſion (if they did do ſo) as moſt ſutable to their Apprehenſions, or Inclinations, or Cuſtoms. But it doth not follow therefore, that we muſt needs obſerve the ſame Manner, if the ſame Thing can be done another Way, and to the ſame Ends and Uſe. Therefore unleſs they can prove this Particularity by the Inſtitution, or ſuch Texts as are clearly declarative of it, theſe Examples will not bind us to the like Obſervation. For an Example is no Rule or Obligation of it ſelf; ſo that the Rule it ſelf muſt be firſt proved, before an Example can be made uſe of in Argument. So that this Argument from Example alone is of no Force at all. And we have ſeen before, that there is nothing to be certainly concluded from the bare Words by which the Ordinance is expreſs'd, to prove this Form of Adminiſtration that is ſo conteſted about.

If it be ſaid, *That the Senſe of our Saviour's Inſtitution may be competently gathered from their Cuſtoms.* I anſwer, That they had ſeveral ſorts of Baptiſms, or Waſhings, and Purifications, and many of theſe were by Sprinkling: So that which of thoſe are we ſure that our Saviour referred to?

If it be ſaid, that their manner of Baptiſm before was by Dipping or Immerſion, and ſo that our Saviour in the Inſtitution of Chriſtian Baptiſm ſuppoſed, at leaſt, or ordered it to be adminiſtred in their Mode, and that the word *baptize* muſt ſignify to do as they did. *I anſwer*, firſt, that that muſt be proved by Scripture to be *their* Mode of Adminiſtration, before a Neceſſity can be inferred by this Argument, that it muſt be ours. For if they produce an unſcriptural Proof, though the thing be true, though it may illuſtrate an Argument, yet it will not be enough to enforce an Aſſent, ſo as to build the Neceſſity of ſuch a Practice upon. And yet again, if it could be proved never ſo ſubſtantially from Scripture it ſelf, that this was always the Jewiſh Mode of Adminiſtration of Baptiſm, yet it will not follow that this Mode or Manner was preſcribed by our Saviour in his Inſtitution: For his Inſtitution reſpects the End rather than the Manner, that is, he bid them do what they did

did to such an End, (as Baptism is now designed for) but he did not bid them do it only in *that* way. For our Saviour's Institution doth not seem to respect the Way at all, but the End and the Matter; so that if there be any kind of Application of Water to such an end, the Institution is satisfied. And these Examples do nothing at all to oblige to this or that particular Form.

And yet it is to be observed again, that if the Institution had respected the Manner as well as the End, that many things have been observed and done in the first Administration of an Ordinance, in conformity to such Particularities in the Institution, that in after-Administrations have been omitted or altered, *viz.* in Matters that have not related to the Essence of the Ordinance. Thus it was in the Matter or Business of the *Passover*, which according to the first Institution was to be eaten *standing*, and *in haste, with their Loins girded, and Staffs in their Hands*; to denote, perhaps, their hasty Passage and Deliverance out of *Egypt*. But these Circumstances, when they came to possess the Land of *Canaan*, in after-Generations, were wholly omitted. And we find Christ and his Apostles in a Table-posture, in that Passover which he celebrated with them, quite different from the first Institution; the particular Posture being not relative to the main End of the Institution; and the Circumstances being altered that the Institution at first had respect unto: And so why may it not be in this Case? So that though it should be supposed, that *their* way of Administration of Baptism was by Immersion, and that our Saviour had respect to that way in the first Institution, it having been *their* Mode and Custom *before* in that warm Country; yet upon Variation of Places and Customs, why may we not here also suppose an Allowance, if the Alteration of the Manner, in Accommodation to such Places or Persons, parallel to that Alteration that was before about the Passover? For surely a Change of Climates makes a great Alteration of Circumstances; the Northern Climates being much colder than the Southern, on this side the Equinoctial. And Immersion or Bathing in cold Water, which was pleasurable enough in *Judea*, will be very troublesom and dangerous in the Northern Regions, especially at some times of the Year, and to some Persons that are sickly or weak. And yet no doubt but our Saviour intended that Baptism should be common to all Places, and Times, and Persons: For we do not read in Scripture, that ever they deferred Baptism after they were converted to the Christian Faith, at what time soever of the Year it was. And yet withal it is plain, from the general Rule, that God requires Mercy and not Sacrifice; and therefore our Saviour, we may be sure, would not have an external Ordinance to be ordinarily detrimental or dangerous to any of the Subjects of it; as plunging in cold Water must needs be to some Persons, especially in cold Climates, without a continual Miracle, which we are not ordinarily to expect: For as he

tells

tells us in another Instance, *the Sabbath was made for Man, and not Man for the Sabbath*; and therefore was not to have any Detriment from it, that could be conveniently prevented. For a natural Law must be supposed always to over-rule positive Institutions. And why may we not in the same manner argue, that Baptism likewise was made for Man, and not Man for Baptism? And therefore when such a Manner of Baptism would ordinarily become hurtful to Man in some Places, we may by the same Rule conclude, that another Manner may be substituted in the room of it, if it may answer to the same Ends and Purposes. And though *that* of Dipping might be the manner in that warm Country, where the Institution was first delivered, yet it is not reasonable to suppose that *that* should be alike prescribed to other Persons and Places, to whom and where it would become dangerous and hurtful to the Life and Health of Man, when another will do as well.

III. I come therefore now to shew, that it is not necessary to the Ends of Baptism, that it should be administred by Dipping. For the cleansing Nature of Water, without considering the Quantity, will be sufficient to signify all that is intended by it. And it is the Significancy of Water alone, as a Sign, and not the natural Virtue of it, can here be intended. And this Significancy may be sufficiently expres'd by the Use of it in any Quantity, it being the purifying and cleansing Property of Water that is considerable in this Ordinance. So that whether we take it as a Sign from God to us, of his cleansing us from Sin and Guilt by the Blood and Spirit of Christ, and his owning us for his own holy peculiar People; or whether we take it as a Sign from us to God, of our Obligation and Dedication to Purity and Holiness, as the Servants of God; the Use of it, by Asperson or Application of it to us, will be of like Significancy to Immersion or Plunging of us *into it*.

And that this may not be thought to be only our Imagination, it is to be observed, that those very Benefits which are signified by Baptism, are often set out by the Expression of *sprinkling*. And if the thing signified may be sufficiently expres'd in this way, then surely it is sufficient that the Sign should be so used, as to represent or express the same. For the Sign is but for the sake of the thing signified. Thus the Expiation of Sin by the Blood of Christ, and the Communication of the Benefits of his Death, is set out by Sprinkling, 1 Pet. 1. 2. *Through Sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ*. And *Heb.* 12. 24. *This is that Blood of Sprinkling that speaketh better things than the Blood of* Abel. And so *Heb.* 10. 22. we come to have *our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience*. And the Communication of God's Grace, and Assistance of his holy Spirit, for the Sanctification of our Hearts and Lives, is set out in the same manner. Thus we have that Prophecy, with respect to Gospel-

Cyprian. Epist. ad Magnum.

times, *Isa.* 52. 15. *He shall sprinkle many Nations*, that is, by bestowing his Word and Spirit upon them, to convert and bring them to an holy Submission to himself. And so *Ezek.* 36. 25. *Then will I sprinkle clean Water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your Filthiness, and from all your Idols will I cleanse you.* And thus we find the manner was in the Ceremonial Cleansings; as in cleansing of the Levites, *Numb.* 8. 7. *Thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them; sprinkle clean Water of purifying upon them.* And so when any one was unclean with any Ceremonial Uncleanness, he was to be *purified*, by sprinkling the *Water of Separation*, Numb. 19. 13. So that it seems that all sorts of Purification or Cleansing may be sufficiently express'd by sprinkling of Water or Blood. So that the Sprinkling of Water in Baptism is likewise sufficient to express or signify what is to be signified thereby: It being not the Quantity, but the cleansing Nature of Water, that is intended in it, as a Sign to the Purposes to which it is designed. As in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, it is not the Quantity of Bread and Wine that is necessary to the Significancy intended therein, of strengthning and refreshing our Souls by the Body and Blood of Christ; but Bread and Wine used in any Quantity whatsoever. So the Significancy and End of Baptism doth not depend upon the Quantity of Water used therein, but only upon that Use of it, whatever Quantity it be in.

But say our Brethren of the other Perswasion, that the Significancy of Baptism is not sufficiently express'd, unless, according to the Apostle, we are buried in Baptism under Water, as they understand that Place, *Rom.* 6. 4. *We are buried with him by Baptism into Death:* Which Place they produce, both to prove the manner of Baptism by Dipping, and also the Necessity of it. Whereas I think that neither one nor the other can be proved from it: The Apostle's Design in that Place is to engage Christians to a Forsaking or Renunciation of Sin: And the Argument he useth is taken from their Baptism, because *they are baptized*, in their Baptism, *into the Similitude of Christ's Death, and so are buried with him by Baptism into Death*, so as to die to Sin: *That as Christ* died for Sin, so we by our Covenant-Engagement in our Baptism, undertake avowed Death to Sin, evermore to renounce and forsake it, and to live a new regenerate Life answerable to Christ's Resurrection. And
Ver. 5. this is to be *planted together* with Christ *in the likeness of his Death*; and so we are to be *in the likeness of his Resurrection.* And *our old Man is crucified*
Ver. 6. *with him, that the Body of Sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should*
Ver. 11. *not serve Sin:* And therefore we must *reckon* our selves, by this our Covenant-Engagement, *to be dead indeed unto Sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord*; to live a Life of Holiness according to the Will of God. So that 'tis a departing from Sin which the Apostle here intends, and argues from

from Baptiſm as an engaging Covenant-ſign thereunto, and makes uſe of the ſeveral Metaphors of Death and Burial, and planting into Death, and Crucifixion, to expreſs this departing from Iniquity, to which by Baptiſm we are engaged.

But ſay they, *The Apoſtle alludes to the Practice or Cuſtom of baptizing by dipping under Water.* But how doth that appear? they muſt prove the Cuſtom before they can prove that this is an Alluſion to the Cuſtom: For an Alluſion to a Cuſtom ſuppoſeth it, which muſt be made out ſome other way. For it muſt firſt appear, that *that* was the Cuſtom, before it can appear that this is an Alluſion to it; ſo that this Text alone doth not prove the Cuſtom. And we ſee that the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe may be very well underſtood without ſuppoſing ſuch an Alluſion. And yet if the Cuſtom be owned, and the Alluſion be granted, the Apoſtle's Alluſion doth not prove the Neceſſity of it. In other Scriptures we ſee, there is an Alluſion to Sprinkling, yet we don't argue the Neceſſity of Sprinkling from ſuch an Alluſion: Nor can the Neceſſity of Dipping be argued from this. For the Force of the Apoſtle's Argument doth not lie in this, that they were buried under Water, (though it be admitted they were ſo) but that they were obliged by their Baptiſm, as an engaging Sign, to depart from Sin; which they may be as well, if Baptiſm were adminiſtred by Sprinkling; ſo that the thing deſigned is equally attained this way, though not under the Notion or Metaphor of Burial, yet under another Notion that ſignifieth the ſame thing, though not in the ſame manner. And it is the thing it ſelf that is to be reſpected, and not as it is expreſs'd under ſuch or ſuch a Metaphor. And therefore I can never think, that there ſhould be ſo much Streſs laid upon a Practice only for the ſake of a certain Metaphor to be built upon it, when the thing it ſelf may be argued without it, or under any other as well as that.

Thus I hope I have made out, that there is no Neceſſity of baptizing by Dipping to be proved by Scripture. And no body pretends, as I know, the Neceſſity of any other particular determinate Form.

Inference 1. And hence then I infer, that the particular Mode or Form of Baptiſm is a thing indifferent, as not coming under any Precept, or being any way eſſential to the Ordinance. As the Anabaptiſts do allow, that it is indifferent whether Perſons be baptized naked or in their Clothes, (though I think that that may fairly admit of a Diſpute) there being as they think no poſitive Rule for either. So for the ſame Reaſon ſhall I make the like Concluſion concerning the Mode of the Adminiſtration, whether by Dipping or Sprinkling.

2. And

2. And then if the particular Form or Mode be indifferent, then to lay ſuch a Streſs upon it, as if the Worſhip or Ordinance could not be otherwiſe acceptably performed or obſerved, can be nothing elſe but an unreaſonable Superſtition.

3. And if it be indifferent, then to make a Breach and Schiſm in the Church for the ſake of it, to cry down all other Baptiſm for a Nullity, beſides their own, and to condemn all other Churches as no Churches, and their Ordinances as no Ordinances, and their Miniſtry as no Miniſtry, for the ſake thereof; and to promote, continue, and carry on with ſo much Importunity, a cauſleſs and uncharitable Separation and Diviſion by means thereof, muſt needs be very highly criminal.

Ch. 14. 19. I ſhall conclude all with the Apoſtle's Exhortation to the Romans, *Let us follow after the things that make for Peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.* 2 Cor. 13. 11. And that to the Corinthians; *Finally, Brethren, farewel: Be perfect; be of one Mind, live in Peace; and the God of Love and Peace ſhall be with you.*

THE END.

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